The MESSAGE of TO-MORROW

John Lloyd Lee

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The Message of To-Morrow

The Message of To-Morrow or The Gospel of Hope

BY

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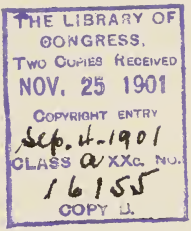

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BY
JOHN LLOYD LEE
(September)

TO MY WIFE,

LILLIE DIETZ LEE,

WHOSE CONSTANT HELPFULNESS HAS MADE

THIS SERVICE POSSIBLE,

THIS VOLUME IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED

PREFACE

WHOEVER lights a taper in the darkness helps to cheer the world. The kinds of illumination are legion, yet there is always room for one more light, and he who has it must let it shine, or answer for the stumbling of a brother.

This is no attempt at throwing down the Golden Apples to stop a runner in his course, but rather a clearing of the way by which he may run the better.

It is with this humble hope of helpfulness, and at the earnest request of many who have heard them, that these discourses are sent forth.

That they may be even more helpful in this form than when preached recently in the Westminster Presbyterian Church, is the earnest prayer of the author.

NEW YORK, *August* 12, 1901.

CONTENTS

I

The Message of To-morrow. The Lost Pleiad—Nathanael's vision—Menyana—The Only Undiscovered Country—Prophecy not Closed—Who the Prophets Are—Life's Plan—The Temple at Sogd—Man Reads His Own Prophecy First—Testimony—The Christian Power—The Acting Christ—The Parthenon—Divine Architecture—Christian Purpose—Christ's Right—Christian Conscience—The Final Fact. St. John 1:50. 11

II

The New Century and Its Mission. Fulfillments—Preparations—Commerce—Gifts of Money—The English Language—The Holy Spirit Rules—Universal Principle—Oneness—Witnessing for Christ. Acts 1:8. 34

III

The Program of Life. The New Year—The Broken Hearted—The Captives—"If I Were God"—Who are the Blind and How—How our Ancestors Trip us—Acceptable Time—An Echo Dome. St. Luke 4:18, 19. 46

IV

Labourers Together With God. A Saviour for Every Time of Need—Conformity to God's Plan—The Labourer's Law—How God Works Through Men—God's Building—Statue of Gen. R. E. Lee—"Complete in Him." 1 Corinthians 3:9. . . 60

V

The Power of the Gospel. The Power of News—The Gospel—Pardon—The Tragedies of Life—Sin a Power—Saving Life—God's Reward for the Cost of Salvation—"Second Hand Building Material"—God's Temple—Belief that Wins—Certainty. Romans 1:16. 71

VI

The Rights of a Man Before the Face of the Most High. Before the Judge in Court—Man's Right to Live—Man's Right of Choice—The Appeal to Justice—"If Ever God Weeps"—Justice not Beyond Prison and Scaffold—The Meaning of Mercy—The Spanish Army—Aguinaldo. Lamentations 3:35. 86

VII

The Secret of Happiness, or How to Keep Young. The Power of Youth—Making the Most of Life—How God is Pleased—What Life Does—Heart Cheer—Human Tests—Like the Feudal Castle—Learning to Walk—Keeping Ourselves Before our Eyes—The Mirror—The X Ray—The Settling of Accounts—Well Done. Ecclesiastes 11:9. . 100

VIII

The Power of an Endless Life. Eternity—Power—How Life is Revealed—Why We are Discouraged—St. Gothard's Tunnel—What Widens Life—What Makes us Old—Life's Rewards—Paid as We Go—After Their Kind. Hebrews 7:16. . . 111

IX

The Peace of God. Paul the Peace Warrior—How Spain found Peace—According to God's Nature—

Passeth Understanding—A King in a Hovel—Military Guard—Walled Cities—Testing the Compass—The Captain's Face—The Careworn Mother. Philippians 4:7. 126

X

What All Should Do About the Gospel. The Lost Penny—Attention—The Stutterer and Long Distance Talk—Never Disappointed—The Gospel Undervalued—The Kaiser and his Subject—The How of Things—The Great Cause. St. John 3:2. 138

XI

Life's Venture. The Carpenter as a Fisherman—Christ Launching out—Inventions—The Churches' Part—God's Answer to the Soul's Need—Queen Victoria—Faith as the Mustard Seed. St. Luke 3:4. 153

XII

The Christ Power. The New Vision—Our Defense—The King and the Seer—The Power that Must Work—Spiritual Gravity—Columbus and the "One Thing"—Certainty—The New Condition—The Fool and His Error—Does God Delight to Punish—The Look Above the Clouds. St. John 9:15. 167

XIII

The Crossbearer. Atlas—How the Cross of Christ was Heavy—How Christ Suffers—Growing Pains—Man Tries to Avoid Suffering. . . . 180

XIV

God's Revelation of Good and Three Ways of Gaining It. Goodness not Manufactured—Three Kinds—Doing Justly—The Consumptive and his Cure—

Loving Mercy—Sacrificing the Brain—The President and the Pardon—Walking Humbly with God —The Alps—Sinai—Calvary. Micah 6:8. . 192

XV

God's Care. The Unwelcome Sparrow—Sale of the Sparrow Legal—A Storm at Manila—God Cares for a President—The Watchmaker and the Jewel —"One of Them"—Our Father. Matthew 10: 29. 203

XVI

A Bargain with God. Fleeing from Justice—The Bargain—Fortuna—Sovereign and Subject—God is in This Place—Knowledge—Linked with Divine Life —Do not Let Me Go Astray—The Pledge, a Gift— When Religion Helps. Genesis 28:20, 21. . 213

XVII

The Man of Faith. What Faith Does—Westminster Abbey—The Musical Instrument—Above Conditions — Fear — Danger—Obedience—Ruskin—The Future—Worship Blesses the World—The Decree of Destiny. Hebrews 11:1. 225

XVIII

God so Loved the World. The Perfect Message— What It Is to All—Love so Great—What Salvation Cost God—How God Suffers—Helen Keller—God's Sympathy—Everlasting Life—The Image of God— What God Sees in Us—The Fable of the Monk— Like the Ship. St. John 3:16. . . . 237

XIX

The Great Ransom. Christ Came Willingly—Christ Touched by Suffering—The Southern Soldier—A Johnstown Flood Victim—The Young Missionary

—The Doctor and the Leper—The Royal Physician —A King in a Hospital—Held for $25.000 Ransom—Sold Twice—Ransom Sufficient. Matthew 20: 28. 252

XX

What Must I Do to be Saved? Conditions—Asleep—On the Railroad Track—The Great Need—The Prisoner—The Drunkard in the Meeting—At Niagara—The Prisoner at Toulon—"For the Baker's Sake"—Kindness Sows Its Own Seed. Acts 16: 30. 266

XXI

Prayer and Providence—Do They Conflict? The Praying Soldier—Two Sides—The Love Side of God—The Tests—The Victory—The Sickly Mother —The World Managed by Prayer—The Praying Church Member—More than Conquerors. Daniel 6: 10. 280

XXII

The Ever Present Christ. Darkness—Light—God Stands by all Things—The Catacombs and the Guide—The Fiery Furnace—Companionship with Christ—"Suffer Little Children"—"Cling Close to the Rock"—Inviting the Stranger in—His Infinite Love. St. Luke 24: 15. 294

The Message of To-Morrow

or

The Gospel of Hope

"Ye shall see greater things than these."—*St. John 1:50.*

We went from under an inky sky of night in old Virginia, into the summer home of a great sculptor, and saw in snow white marble the form of a beautiful maiden represented as resting upon a high mountain, and looking far into space. It was plain that this had come from some strange story; and on inquiry we were told this legend.

Long ago seven beautiful sisters dwelt together in supreme happiness in the sky. One day pursued by Orion one was separated from the rest and made to wander on alone. The six, closely followed by the enemy, were changed by Jupiter into stars and set forever in the heavens. The seventh, the lost Pleiad, for so she was, travelled from sea to sea, from land to land, and from clime to clime in search of her sisters, who all the while were keeping watch over her from above. Sad and disconsolate she went unknown among the nations of the earth, with no ray of

hope shining above the horizon. No helping hand was offered her, and no word of sympathy came from any human being. Worn and weary she cast herself down on the highest mountain peak, and placing her hand beneath her head, she saw far up in the silent vault of heaven, her sisters in their shining beauty. Then she knew that not they, but she had been lost, and that if she had looked up at the beginning she would have been spared the seven long years of weary wandering. No sight in all her travels was half so welcome as that of her sisters whom she had just found.

Like the lost Pleiad, Nathanael long looked for the light and guide of his life, who now stood before him with this great promise, "Ye shall see greater things than these." Unlike the lost Pleiad, who sought so long for those whom she loved, Nathanael was sought by the One whom he loved.

We, with the thousands since that day, step for a moment into the tracks of wise Nathanael to hear what further revelations and see what further sights may be ours. Like the lost Pleiad and like this disciple, we see wondrous sights and then learn to our surprise that the story of Christ has just begun, and the divine picture is just unfolding. All the while the six watchful sisters were in the sky shedding light upon the wanderer's way. All the while the Christ of God has been our comfort and stay, but we may not

have seen Him. Then there suddenly flashes before us this vision of Christ and with it the promise,

"Thou shalt see greater things than these."

What then is the future to us? In the sunny south-land of this continent, where the Spanish language is spoken, the people have a way of asking when they meet, "Menyana?" What of to-morrow? Thus they throw life into the future and make it the main period of time. So in this story of the Gospel, as yet largely untold, and which is developing little by little. It is the question "Menyana?" What of the future? And Christ stands ready with the declaration, "Ye shall see greater things than these." The same story of hope is written in the lines of that beautiful hymn,

Watchman tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are,
Traveller o'er yon mountain height,
See that glory beaming star!

Watchman does its beauteous ray
Aught of hope or joy foretell?
Traveller, yes; it brings the day—
Promised day of Israel.

Man has gone round and round the world until he has discovered, and disposed of every continent; he has lassoed all the islands, and anchored them as resting places and coaling stations, in the highways of commerce. Man has made in-

ventions up to the limit of the last device, as it would seem, and has disposed of all work. So he has apparently completed all the possibilities of outer life.

Man himself, then, is the only undiscovered country of all the ages. The only incomplete task is this personal revelation, which is referred to in these words of Christ, and which He is pledged to fulfill wherever He is given the right.

Then we find that:

I. THE FUTURE IS FOR MAN. "Thou shalt."

Man's life is largely unwritten. Much of it is being told now, but the greater part is stretching away yonder into the future of time and that eternity which is before us.

But they say that prophecy is all closed; that Isaiah and Jeremiah and all the rest are dead, and that the curtain has been run down forever on the stage of the future. That is a lie. Christ stands before Nathanael and before the whole world and throws wide open the door of the future, when He says, "Thou shalt see greater things than these." No one is to think that he is beholding the final vision, though what he sees may be as sudden and sublime as the lightning flash, or as constant and secure as the never failing sun.

"Shall" is the language of hope, the message of to-morrow, the password which admits us to

the unfolding revelation. It is the great word of Christ who always calls us on to unmeasured possibilities. Hope is immortality walking among men whispering good cheer and showing great pictures of the future such as Bunyan saw in the life of the Christian Pilgrim, and such as John saw in the Revelation. It is the realization of man's highest expectations.

Never was prophecy more abundant and never more open to the eye of every man than now. No man has ever overtaken the horizon before him in his swiftest flight, and never in all his journeys did he find a land where the sun did not pass him in its rapid journey. In the prophecies of the Old Testament the limit was placed at Bethlehem, Calvary, and the life of Christ. To to-day's prophecy no limit is set save with the gathering in of the last man to the household of Christian faith. For the world-wide prophecy of the present and the future is in the command of Christ when He said:

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

That this may be done God has fully ordained all the necessary means. All that is in advance of man and that urges him on to the fulfillment of God's great designs is prophecy. Even natural causes contribute to the great designs of God as in the Old Testament prophecies. The sun has not yet returned in its course to undo the possi-

bilities of its onward sweep, as it paints the sky with glory in the morning and in the evening, to show the beauty of its prophecy.

History has not yet gone back to tear up its record, and it can not, for the facts have been written too deeply in the nature of man, as well as in rocks, in chasms, and in corrugated fields where glaciers have scored their story. So history becomes prophecy as it shows how great man may yet become when he outdoes the past, for "Ye shall see greater things than these."

Every boy is a prophet in his way as really as Isaiah was in his. The boy of to-day has a future before him, vaster than that of any of the old prophets, and an audience far greater, and if he will only learn how to speak, he may fulfill even a greater mission. He has a future before him which calls to him like the echo from the hillside, saying, "Hi, O!, Come on, come on!"

Go there into the field and read in the blade of grass the prophecy of the harvest; in the rose the story of an Eden yet to come; in the sunshine the shadow of the glory of Heaven, and in the hope of the humblest, the story of a great immortality.

But the greatest prophet of all is God Himself. He has placed Himself before every one as Christ stood before Nathanael. In God we are to see our greatest possibilities, for we are to be like Him when we see Him as He is. Look at Him

there, He can not undo Himself or destroy Himself or go back on anything He has said or done. He would not be God if He could. Man may ever look upon Him for the pattern of the life that will defy all the destructive powers of the future. A man may be measured for his future life as readily as for a suit of clothes. But remember that it takes time and work, great and intense, to complete the life for the future as it takes stitch upon stitch to finish the garment.

Here are our plans; open them and see if they have been measured by the divine measure. Here is a plan for a mansion, fair and beautiful, with every detail marked, but this is to be built only of earthly material and will not last forever. Here are the parts of an invention great and good, and men are at work completing that which will be of use to man. But are these all the plans of life? Oh, no. Here is one for the future, for that unknown time which seems never to come. Open it and see what story it tells. But no—it is a blank page, discoloured by age, soiled by dust and stained by the chemistry of the air. What, no plan for that unknown time? Then hold up this blank page to the divine light till it takes upon it the outline of the Divine Nature, like unto Whom we are to grow, then set yourself to the task of filling it in, though with imperfect work, until all is finished, and you are all complete in Him.

Yes God in Christ is the supreme prophecy of life, and our highest ambition is that we may fulfill all that great desire in regard to us.

For this, God gives us time and strength. That is why to-morrow seems never to come. God kindly pushes the time along until we are ready to have the door to the unseen open befor us. "When I was in Sogd," said an Arabian geographer, "I saw a great building like a palace, the gates of which were open and fastened back to the wall with large nails. I asked the reason and was told that the house had not been shut, night or day, for a hundred years. Strangers may present themselves at any hour, and in whatever number; the master has amply provided for the reception of men and their animals, and is never happier than when they tarry for a time."

This is a prophecy of the open revelation of God for us in the future where His great provision is ample for everyone, and where He waits with the patience of His infinite nature. Go there and read that which you know speaks of Him in His providences, and learn by that, that you are near Him, as by the painted signs upon the fence and rocks along the way, you learn that you are near the city.

It used to be said that

"Coming events cast their shadows before," but now we must read it,

"Coming events cast their headlight before," for man carries his own hope which lights the

way before him. Thus we read our history before it is written, and indeed before it is enacted, as the engineer reads the security or the danger of his own journey in the light from his own engine, even before it happens. So it is that we see our history of to-morrow and understand the message before the world sees it. God gives to every man the privilege of reading his own history first; and he who lets the world look upon his life before he has scanned it, is a fool who can not read the message which God has put in his hand.

You go into a photograph gallery, look into the camera and see no result. You do not grow impatient, though some time goes by before there is anything to show for what you did. All this time the photographer is developing that which represents you. You know about what it will be. You are sure it will be like you. So you do not have the picture taken for the present time so much as for the future, for you know you are going to change. So we know about how we look before that God whose eye misses no defect and passes by no excellence. There seems at first to be no result but we are waiting patiently for we know that the great artist is bringing all to completion as fast as He can. Our life lies forward of to-day and we have prophecy enough to know about what it may be, for we shall see greater things than these. When He has finished, and we have been made after the fulfilled proph-

ecy, "we shall be like Him when we shall see Him as He is."

Christ then is the greatest prophecy of every redeemed soul. Go look on Him and see how you will appear. Make certain of that shadowy unknown to-morrow, by placing all in the Almighty hand. He wastes no effort, He risks no time, He has made all this preparation for no vain purpose. He has waited for man to read this divine prophecy in the Son of God, that he may see greater things than these; as one of our poets has said,

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll;
Leave thy low vaulted part!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea."

II. The revelation is for man. "Thou shalt see."

We are then coming to an age of testimony. Not always will the religion of Christ be offered only in precept, but it is working forth into the practices of the world.

The trouble with the lost Pleiad was not that her sisters were not in full view, but that she did not look up. The trouble with Nathanael was not that Christ had not been before him, for He had been in full view in the prophecies of the Old Testament, but that he did not see Him. The

trouble with unbelievers to-day is not that they do not have enough proof, but that they have not given it attention.

Now the coming days of this century are going to be times of conviction and belief. Science has brought her proofs and laid them down on the study table of man and they read,

"I have not one word of opposition or contradiction in the case of Christianity, but only proof that it is true."

Reason is summoned and says,

"I have hunted far and wide for the causes of this strange phenomenon called Christianity and I find nothing inconsistent, but rather that all is in harmony with eternal truth."

Discovery comes forward and testifies,

"I have been busy these years hunting amid ruins of temple and field for something about this great cause. I have found much in different places all over the world, and every word confirms this divine record."

There comes also the great melody of song that cheers the tired world, that calms the troubled heart of the bereaved, that goes up everywhere as a great chorus on Sabbath day to honour God, that finds its expression in the great Oratorios of the Creation, the Elijah, the Redeemer and the Messiah, and testifies,

"Without Christianity we would never have been born and in our place would have come the cry of woe and despair."

Even dry, stale, severe Mathematics adds its testimony in these words,

"I have measured and computed all things and find that the God of signs and angles and circles and distance and space, and who has made no mistake in any of these, is also the infallible God of all the future."

But the greatest of all the testimonies by which man shall see greater things than came before Nathanael, are in human experience. God has opened enough of the world's history to prove to us all He has ever said. The laws which He gave to Moses have governed the world ever since Israel was encamped at Sinai. They have worked themselves into all the manners and customs of every civilized nation, and never can be changed. The cry of old David for pardon and for an intimate life with God, finds a responsive chord in every human heart, so that the Psalms of the Old Testament will be remembered as long as human hearts beat. The logic of Paul, which was too much for the keen Rabbi, which silenced the wise Athenian, which outdid the rich Corinthian, and brought the whole world with bowed head to acknowledge the power and supremacy of the Nazarene,—will that ever be forgotten? No? Then the testimony of the Gospel of Christ is sufficient and there is no reason why man should not see with open eyes, the eternal vision which governs the world.

For eighteen hundred years man has travelled

along this divine path and it is going to take something very unusual to turn him aside. So well has God made all preparation for man's future, that if a man will but look, he must see the way of life. The lost Pleiad needed only to look up to see the desire of her heart. Nathanael needed only to look up to see the Christ, and then onward to see the bright future that would come to all who would trust the Lord.

God is piling up human testimony which will answer the objection of every infidel, and it is being done in the most human way. For instance in A. D. 1600 the Christian power of the world controlled 7 per cent. of the surface of the earth, and in 1893, 82 per cent. During the same time the non-Christian nations decreased in power from 93 per cent. to 18 per cent. At the present time the Protestant nations alone rule about twice as much territory as all the non-Christian nations combined. Surely this is the power of Moses and Isaiah, and David and Paul and ten thousand others, and is not without its mission. How wonderfully God has made ready for man's great future. In the light of this, any one who will not see as Christ told Nathanael he should, must henceforth be regarded as a natural fool and must be rejected as a note that is out of date. But he who will enter the future, that unknown and uncertain to-morrow, with eyes turned to Him who alone can mark out the life that is to last forever, as the Pleiad looked to the sky, and as

Nathanael looked at Christ, will see that all the ages have been preparing the way for Him to enter into the eternal inheritance, and shall see as Christ said, heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man; so each may say in the sublime words of the poet Whitman,

"Immense have been the preparations for me.
Faithful and friendly the arms that have helped me.
Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful boatmen,
For room to me stars kept in their own rings,
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.
All forces have been steadily employed to complete and delight me."

III. The triumph is for man. "Thou shalt see greater things than these."

Is that possible? There stood the Christ of God before Nathanael, and was He not the greatest sight of all? Yes, but remember that Christ had not yet begun His great work. As He stood there He was great, but how much greater when He was active, enthusing all things with His presence, moving all things by His power, touching and changing all history with His magic wand.

But what are the greater things which we shall see? If you will read the next verse you will see, that Christ tells what is the greater vision for He says in explanation,

"Ye shall see heaven open and the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

At once our minds run back to the story of Jacob's dream when he saw the ladder let down from heaven, and saw the angels ascending and descending. In Jacob was the hope of the Jewish race. In Christ was the hope of the whole world. The mission of Christ then is specially to bring back the exile to the blessed home. Jacob should not always stay in the foreign land, and while there he has the divine help. So while we are in this sinful world we have the divine help to strengthen and sustain.

It is then the recovery of man that is to so interest the world and to even surprise the angels, for we are told that the angels desired to look into these things. "Because I said, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these."

The wonder of future ages then is man himself. In all machinery produced there must be a hand to guide and keep it in order. And here man shows his skill. Man walks the earth like a giant. Nations rock and tremble under the tread of one man. Banking institutions rest for their security on the shoulders of some careless financier, who by once stumbling, may send all crashing into ruin. This country may be in the throes of poverty only because one man is elected to the Presidency, and again may revel in almost mad prosperity because another man is elected to the same office. The world depends absolutely upon personality, and so does God; for

this is the lesson given to Nathanael in the life and words of Christ. The Saviour cared but little for institutions and customs, but spent His time reaching individuals. He was ever seeking the listening ear of the poor and the needy and the helpless, and the sick, that He might save and keep them. Yes the great future of the world rests on the individual and that is the reason why the salvation of Christ is personal. It is also the reason why Christ is so patient in working out the salvation of men. So much depends upon this in all the future that God can afford to be patient.

In the light of all this the greatest thing that Nathanael or any one else will ever behold is the salvation of the soul from a condition of sin to a condition of righteousness in Christ. The world will ever look upon this with surprise. Greater than material changes, greater than all inventions and discoveries, greater than all acts in human history, it will ever remain the unchanging message of to-day and to-morrow to a needy, helpless but not hopeless world.

They are just now talking of restoring the Parthenon at Athens, that temple of marvellous beauty of the days of Phidias. But they can not do it. A part of it is in the British Museum in London, a part is in Paris, and parts are, who knows where? At the mere suggestion that this old ruin be restored a laugh went up from London, Paris and other places, meaning that the

parts of this temple kept in these cities would not be given up. And if they were surrendered who would fit them together again as they once were, for Phidias is dead and so are the other great men of Greece of that period? No, the Parthenon can never be restored.

But here stands an Architect of the human soul who promises complete restoration. Your life has been pillaged by evil forces. A part is in one museum of the evil one, a part in another; but Christ, greater than Phidias or Michael Angelo or any human architect or sculptor, brings back the wanting parts and says,

"Do you think you were great before you were despoiled? You shall see greater things than these, and be greater in your redeemed life."

We are more perfect than any temple because we are "Complete in Him."

One of the greater things of the restored life is the *unchanging Christian purpose.*

When Warren Hastings was nine years old his father lost his estate. Just before the family were to leave, young Warren went out by the little stream and lay down on the grass and said,

"I can and will make the money to reclaim this estate."

He lay down there as a boy; he rose up as a man because a great purpose had taken hold of him. Forty years later he went to that same spot and carried in his hand the newly secured deed of

the estate. It was a noble purpose and yet not so great as the one to which the text refers.

Henry Wilson, once Vice-President of the United States, when a boy was very poor. He was in a shoe shop in his little town, learning the business of shoe making, and begging for work from place to place. His father was a hopeless, helpless drunkard and so low and lost that the son asked the legislature to change his name that he might be free from his father's curse. Look at him there later in life, holding the second highest office in the gift of the nation. Men wondered at this so much that when he died they weighed his brain, thinking that there must be something in his physical make up to give him such power. But it was found that his brain was slightly under the average. Then they had to acknowledge what he had long told them, that it was his great Christian purpose that had given him such success. Ah yes, the immortal purpose of the Christian will never change save to give larger and greater opportunities as Christ promised Nathanael, when He said,

"Thou shalt see greater things than these."

Another greater power of the restored life and which we shall see, is a true *conviction of Christ's right* in our hearts and in the world. There is no political party that would dare to put forth an infidel for President of the United States. The people of this country would consider it an insult. How would it look for such a one to take

an oath before a God in whom he does not believe and swear upon a Bible which he considers merely human? Even the infidels would not want one of their own number for President, which shows that this spark of hope has not yet left the breast of the unbeliever. There is a conviction that the Christian religion is true, even among the careless, as was shown in a political meeting a little time ago when men broke out in applause at the mention of the name of Christ. Even the indifferent wish their children to go to the Sabbath School and to Church, obeying the conviction of immortal hope which approves of Christ.

Christian Conscience is another greater power arising from the restored life. The accuracy of no material force can equal the accuracy of the working of conscience. The persistency of no machine (unless it be the political machine) can equal the relentless persistency of conscience. It is one of the greatest sights possible to see the world ruled by the unseen force of the Christian Conscience. Not long ago a terrible massacre in Turkey was put down, men hardly knew how, yet it is easy to understand. The Christian Conscience, the tribunal before which Kings and Emperors and Presidents must bow, had called the Turkish nation to Judgment, and there was no escape.

A few days ago ten thousand men gathered in one place in Philadelphia to protest with all their

mights against what they believed to be corruption in their city politics. This was the expression of their outraged consciences. No one can anywhere long stand against ten thousand men, who have good lungs, strong voices and justice in their souls. These men will have their way, for God has so decreed, and the message that greets us at the open door of to-morrow, is that Christian conscience is supreme. What a sight it is to see the redeemed and recovered life holding sway over the whole world. That is what Christ intends shall be done, when He said,

"Ye shall see greater things than these."

God has not made a crown of gold and of emeralds and of diamonds and placed it away there and said,

"You must come along such and such an earthly lineage, before you can rule," but He has made an everlasting crown for everyone no matter who he is, who is willing to come along the lineage of Christ by being born into His kingdom. And he who comes in this way has power and right to rule for he holds in his hand the sceptre of the world. He may even push aside and dethrone kings if need be. Indeed this has been done over and over in the history of the world. A mere boy by the name of Joseph took the place of a king in Egypt and managed the kingdom. A young man, a foreigner and slave, by the name of Daniel, took the reins of government out of the hands of old Darius, and the king was glad to let

the young slave manage all, for he did it so well.

It was an interlinking of the best human agency and the great divine wisdom that brought a rail splitter from an obscure part of this land and made him President of the United States forty years ago that the country might be safely led through a great rebellion. So in all the humbler walks of life, hope, fair beautiful hope, shines before every one a beacon light of God; for "Ye shall see greater things than these," is spoken to the lowly, the needy and the helpless because from these and all other conditions you may rise to be kings and priests unto God.

The final vision that shall greet our eyes, and of which Christ speaks here is that blessed time when heaven and earth shall have joined hands in the great triumph of the kingdom of Christ when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord to the glory of God. This will be the time when the "Angels shall ascend and descend upon the Son of Man." The time shall not be an incident as in the life of Jacob, but shall be a condition, one that will mark forever the triumph of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It shall then be popular to be a follower of the Christ of God. As in the few days of popularity in His life in Palestine, so all the time, will men ascribe their praise, and acclaim Halleluiahs! This is no mere vision. It will be a fact definite and constant in the life of the Chris-

tian Church. The time seems long and the process slow because the recovery of the lost is made one by one until that great time has come. Lift up your eyes to the sky to see what the morrow shall bring forth.

Bid glad welcome to to-morrow, since it brings only the good news of possible growth and enlargement of life, which has been touched by the finger of God.

Remember that the great time of Christ is to be hastened by the attitude and effort of every one, and that the message of to-morrow is the message of hope and recovery of life for "thou shalt see greater things than these."

"An ivy in a dungeon grew,
Uncheered by rain, unfed by dew;
Its pallid leaflets only drank,
Cave moistures foul and odours dank.

But through the dungeon grating high,
There fell a sunbeam from the sky;
It slept upon the grating floor,
In silent gladness evermore.

The ivy felt a tremor shoot,
Through every fibre to the root;
It felt the light, it saw the ray,
It strove to blossom into day.

It grew, it crept, it pushed, it clome,—
Long had the darkness been its home;
But well it knew though veiled in night,
The beauty and the joy of light.

It reached the beam,—it thrilled, it curled,
It blessed the warmth that cheers the world,
It rose above the dungeon bars,
It looked upon the sun and stars.

It felt the life of bursting spring,
It heard the happy skylark sing;
It caught the breath of morns and eves,
And wooed the swallows to its leaves.

By rain and dew and sunshine fed,
Over the outer wall it spread;
And in the day-beam waving free,
It grew into a steadfast tree.

Would you know the moral of this rhyme?
Behold the light of Christ and climb.
To the soul's dungeon comes this ray
Of Christ the light, the life, the way."

II

THE NEW CENTURY AND ITS MISSION

"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, . . . unto the uttermost parts of the earth."—*Acts 1: 8.*

THE parting of the centuries was at the day of Pentecost. All before that was old, staid and formal; all since has been bright, new and spiritual. About that time the world's calendar was destroyed, and the Christian calendar, which conforms to God's plan was begun. The events in the life of Christ were in fulfillment of the Old Testament demands, and of the necessary conditions of the Christian Church.

A little band of three hundred men, under Gideon, turned heathenism aside from further attacks, for the time, on the developing Jewish race. Three hundred men at Thermopylæ, under Leonidas, turned the tide of the old world back upon itself, and made to flow in its place the strong current of new civilization to all the world.

But here are fewer, only one hundred and twenty, who stood against the whole world. Yet these men were supreme, because they had on their side Him who had said,

"All power is given unto Me both in heaven and in earth;" and, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

We have come to the time when fulfillments are to be the order of the day. Shall we find the countless secrets of manufactory and of invention, of art, of science, of steam and electricity, and not find the secrets in the moral and the spiritual world? By no means. To uncover the one is to uncover the other. So the impetus that the world is gaining in the great forward movement, is bound to carry us to greater developments of higher life. There is therefore a general belief that we have come to a great era in the history of the world.

I. The preparation for the exercise of God's power has been ample.

Christ said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power." If the Church has been waiting until the time is ripe, she surely need wait no longer. All is in swift preparation. The speculator is enlarging his plans, the scholar is adding to his library, the manufacturer is improving his machinery, the Churches are pushing on into heathen lands on all sides of the world, and the historian is sharpening his pencil, to make the record of greater worldwide achievements.

Commerce flies with swifter wing than ever before, and dares to enter every port in all the

rivers and seas. Inventions have multiplied until man is hardly needed for the work of the world, except to direct and control, organized mechanical power. A high official in the Patent office at Washington, said a short time ago that he had long since ceased to be surprised at anything invented, that he believed everything except a flying machine would be produced, and that he had little doubt that this exception would soon be eliminated.

Furthermore a great preparation for the advance movement of the Christian Church, is to be found in the unusual benevolence of recent years. It requires money to carry on any great work, and especially is this true of the evangelization of the world. To answer this need God has led to a season of great benevolence on the part of many. During last year the gifts of some of the rich have aggregated $62,461,304, of which nearly $35,000,000, or considerably more than one-half, went to universities, colleges and other educational institutions. Of the remaining $27,000,000 a little more than a half went to charities, while nearly $9,000,000 was given to churches. The balance of $5,000,000 was divided about evenly between museums, art galleries and libraries.

Then it must be remembered that the benevolence of the great host of men and women who give from moderate and small fortunes, and from

modest annual incomes that are earned by daily industry, is far greater relatively than the benevolence of the very rich.

Can any one doubt the meaning of such a preparation for the sway of God's power?

But the most remarkable preparation for the coming of the Spirit in power is the spread of the English language. There seems to be necessary some particular language which shall carry the truth of God to all men; and the English language is the one. Not only has it become common to tell the vast number of Bibles printed in the English, (more than in any other two languages), but also that the books which have had the widest sale of any publications in modern times, have been in the English and upon subjects which take hold of the eternal verities of the Christian faith, " Ben Hur," " Titus, a Companion of the Cross," " In His Steps," " The Master Christian," and others may be named. Take this together with the fact that the English speaking people are fast getting control of the whole world and you can easily see the Providence working in events. All nations now are forced to learn the English language. Great Britain has acquired territory in almost every part of the earth, and America has followed with the Gospel to make the Christian life, and the English language secure. In America, every man from any other shore is compelled to learn the English language, if he would do business and live happily. And

yet no one is forced in this land to learn any other than the mother tongue.

When the great missionary Carey began his career about a century ago, only about 22,000,000 could speak the English language or about 1 in every 67 of the people on the whole earth, and 1 in every 7 of the people in Europe. At the present time about 120,000,000 use the English or about 1 in every 12 of the people of the whole earth and 1 in every 4 of all the people of Europe. The meaning of all this is clear when we remember that the English language is the great missionary language of the world. God has not been inactive while his church has been "tarrying at Jerusalem" in these modern days.

What an outlook then for the opening of the twentieth century! Surely we who stand in the presence of all this marvellous development owe the world a great service. All seems ready now for a forward movement. Even the heart hunger of the church which is to make us fully ready for the great events in the twentieth century, has appeared, for the year books of some of the churches for 1900 show disappointments. One great denomination with over 7,000 churches, records 1,500 churches which have not reported a single conversion. Another denomination, which has over 8,000 churches, reports 2,000 churches without a single conversion.

Our cities all show the great need of a nobler and better Christian faith. Decayed city govern-

ments curse the best spots on earth, and men of high and noble purpose are crying out for some kind of relief. Not only is there then the external preparation for a great revival, but the crying need, which will stir alike the heart of God and man.

With these things we face the opening century expectantly. We have long "tarried at the city of Jerusalem." We are now feverish for the full out-pouring of the power of the Holy Spirit. Not at the day of Pentecost was there larger hope and greater desire toward the future than now. Never has the whole world been so moved with longing for great results. Never has there been such organization for advance movement as is now found in the Christian Church. Never was the world so anxious for the dawn of Christian glory. So true is this that Mr. Moody said, as one of his last utterances, that we are on the eve of the greatest revival the world has ever known.

How then is this to be brought about? The answer is found in the text,

II. "After that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

Divine power through the Holy Spirit is to rule the world. Why should this be thought strange? Why may we not expect marvellous developments in the Christian life? God has more than a passing interest in this world, else He would never have sent His Son to die for us.

God has never thought worth while to instruct mankind on the great subjects of mechanics or chemistry or astronomy. Man has had to find these things for himself. But on moral and spiritual subjects, He has been most exact in His revelations. Long ago He sent angelic messengers to reveal His will, and after that He wrote His word to remain forever, His letter of instruction to all the human race. There is no meaning in all that has happened in the last five hundred, yes in the last eighteen hundred years if there be no revival of God's power and God's grace near at hand. Time has been given by the great God for the trial of everything which man might regard as a substitute for the power of the Holy Spirit. Education, science, reason, morality, and all the rest have entered the arena of contest, and sin has met and vanquished every one of them. So the world to-day needs this very power of God. It is not to come with great sound of the trumpet, conflicting with every plan and purpose of man, but is to enter into the very life of man quietly and there rule in power.

Little do we think that the sunshine rules us: and yet it does. We rise at its coming, we work in its light, we lie down and close our eyes to rest in its absence. The sunshine gives us power of muscle, light for the eye, and food for the body. It enters into every part of our nature. We would die without it. Sunshine therefore rules us, and we are its willing subjects.

In this mysterious way, yet more really God enters with power into our lives in the person of the Holy Spirit to give us strength in ourselves, as we have power in Him.

The presence of the Holy Spirit will bring to us a universal principle which is to rule the world, and sometime in this opening century men will learn to think alike in regard to God's presence in the world.

It is not so long ago that all commerce was carried on in a haphazard way. Each sailor managed his ship as he chose, regardless of how his neighbour sailed his. Then men found the providence of God in sea and sky, and all began to sail by the tides of the great deep, and by the winds of heavens. And now there is but one doctrine of navigation, and by it all men sail. The pilot who goes but a little way out to sea, and the captain of the tug, who never leaves the river and harbour, as well as he who runs a great ocean steamer, consult the report of what the winds and the tides may do on each day. In like manner it is not so long since all men followed the leadership of churches independent, one of another. Denominations numerous and different used to build their lines of division high, as though to keep one another out. Doctrinal differences were as varied as the names of the denominations. Fierce persecutions and the bitterest hatreds rose over interpretations of the Word of God. Wars growing out of religious differ-

ences and disputes became the common events of some time ago. But thank God all these differences are being swept away.

The Methodist neighbours with the Presbyterian and the Congregational with the Baptist. In many places about the only way you can tell what kind of a church you are entering is by the name on the board outside. This is the oneness of God's people which will give the Holy Spirit chance to work. It is as is said in the first verse of the second chapter of Acts,

"They were all with one accord in one place," then there came the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Oneness of purpose and of life is necessary before the Holy Spirit of God shall have time and opportunity to work mightily in the world. It is to be an electrified world, all around us. It comes nearly being that now, for electricity is used in hundreds of ways. Insulation is being more and more removed so that the world may be filled and moved and swayed, by this mysterious, yet universal power.

So the world is coming to be run more and more by the great power of God. He is entering into all life. The insulation is being removed, and the world is to be fully held and moved and swayed by the power of God.

When we are all with one accord in one place, this time will come.

This nation had hard work to perform its duty

in 1862 when the land was divided by the secession of some of the states. How could the Government perform its function to the South, and give blessings to all? It could not. It was only after a long and painful experience that the whole nation was again brought together to be as it was formerly, "the land of the free and the home of the brave." The legend,

"E pluribus unum,"

tells the simple story of a great land of power. There have been division after division of God's great kingdom, and how then could the thrill of one great Holy Spirit of God go pulsing through the land. Man knows, as well as does God, that division and separation, mean destruction and death; and that union in purpose and practise bring the greatest possible blessings. It is not that the individual only shall be in harmony with God, so that the Holy Spirit may establish the great kingdom, but the whole world shall be at one with God's great plan of redemption. There is but one Bible given of God because there is to be a oneness and not a division of knowledge and wisdom. There is but one Saviour, because there is to be a oneness and not a division of methods of saving grace. There is but one Holy Spirit because there is to be one teaching of the great power of God, for the Holy Spirit is the teacher. There is to be but one heaven, to bring to us a

uniformity of rewards and a union of happy hearts in the home of the redeemed.

And when the world—the Christian world—learns that a union of purpose and practise shall bring the Holy Spirit in power, then all will be electrified with the universal power of God which we shall receive "after that the Holy Spirit is come upon us." May this glad time come early in this twentieth century!

III. Witnessing is the third great fact of the twentieth century.

"And ye shall be witnesses unto Me."

So large a case was never before called before a tribunal. It concerns the whole human race as well as every individual. Every one is to be both witness and juryman. The great Word and cause of the Almighty is to be established. The very angels must hold their breath in surprise at the way some testify, for not all the witnesses are sworn to tell the truth, because the Judge knows all will not tell it anyhow. Each one takes the oath or refuses as he please. Each shows little or much interest according as he loves the great cause now on trial.

Thank God we are learning the value of truthful testimony. We, in this land have taken a stand which puts us far beyond the possibility of false testimony. We are lifted up before the eye of the whole world, and there is written across our sky, in the plain view of all, like the

"In hoc signo vinces"

of Constantine, that talisman of world conquest,

"Christian";

for we are known as the great Christian nation.

The world is to be brought to Christ through the witness bearing of His followers. To aid in this, God has added every possible facility. He has given the wealth of the world, into the hands of Christian people. Discoveries, inventions and the use of mechanical power has brought the great Christian countries to the front, and has made them the forerunners of the Gospel in the heathen lands. And above all, there are the sacrificing missionaries who go as the witnesses to the great cause which is to rule the world.

The greatest cause of the universe is called and must be proved, and "ye are witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

Give righteous testimony and then take your place with those of immortal fame, and thus fulfill the highest mission in the new century.

"Hand in hand with the angels,
Blessed so to be,
Helped of all the helpers,
Giving light they see;
He that aids another,
Strengthens more than one
Sinking earth he bindeth,
To the great white throne."

III

THE PROGRAM OF LIFE

"He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." *Luke 4: 18, 19.*

EVERY thoughtful person has his program of action for the day, for the year, and for the unknown future. To him life is a continual performance in which he is both manager and chief actor, with all others grouped around him as helpers. To know a man's future is to know the man.

The greatest example of this is Christ, who in this text gives His program of His earthly career. He seized upon several great facts in human life, such as the aching heart, the bondage of sin, the blindness that comes from an evil life, and tells of His power to change all into the great glad jubilee of God. It is a life picture selected from the gallery of Isaiah, where there was represented the most that was left to Israel after their wars and persecutions and captivities, as the most that is left after the scourging wars of Napoleon and about him is to be found in the picture galleries which immortalize his name.

So Christ stood before His earthly life with definite aim and perfect plan.

To-day we stand before our future, the new year, the new century, the new life, and arrange our program, for we too are immortal. This may best be done by catching the spirit of Him whose purpose never changed and whose plan never failed. He it is who teaches us that the future is not altogether an unknown country, for He has passed through it. As Israel of old waiting on the border of the promised land, sent spies to view the country, and received favourable reports from but two; so we send our hopes, our longings, our aims, and our faith to spy out the year; and though but few report favourably, we go forward sure of victory for we are entering the promised land. We are facing westward in these days of swift progress, and as the sun rises in the East we see in the X ray shadow of ourselves before us, the dim outline of our lives according to the divine plan. Longfellow expresses it in these words,

"Look not mournfully into the past. It comes not back again. Wisely improve the present, it is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear, and with a manly heart."

From to-day you will have but little interest in the year 1900, unless on account of some unpaid bills and unsettled obligations. You have little interest in 1899, less in 1898, and so on back to

childhood. Most of the past is to be forgotten. You would not repeat those years in the same way if you could; at least the future will fully engage your time and attention. The better, the nobler, the larger our lives, the more do we owe to others. Paul was not "debtor to the Greek and to the Jew, to the wise and to the unwise," until he was rich in the grace of God. The ignorant man must spend his time in getting knowledge, the wise man in spending what he has already gained. We are all more or less wise in this blessed land, therefore our plan differs mostly from that of Christ in intensity and not in kind. Christ had a mission, and so have we. He was sent, so are we. This is revealed in the text; for He was sent,

I. "To HEAL THE BROKEN HEARTED."

What a strange new treatment. There are those who bind up the broken arm and the broken limb, but where is the surgeon for the broken heart? There are hospitals for the diseased body and the shattered health, but he who has only the broken heart must go on until he falls by the way. There are countless physicians for the body, yet so few who care for the poor tired soul. But there has come One whose special mission is to heal the broken hearted, and He never fails to cure. In the text He speaks forth in words from Isaiah which have been a challenge to all the world for centuries. No one has disputed

their meaning, no one now disputes their authority.

By the broken hearted He does not mean merely the discouraged, for all are at times discouraged; nor the diseased for all thus suffer; nor yet the disappointed, but it means especially those who have lost hope. It refers to the time of captivity of the Jews when they had long since given up the thought of returning to their own land, and hence to the hopeless condition of man in sin.

Is it not strange that God should be interested in any one so helpless and worthless, the God who loves perfection and beauty, and upon whom imperfection must always jar? Why should He be interested in a ruined thing? Because it is His nature to care for the needy as is, in a small way, shown in the physician who will relieve suffering regardless of the pay he is to receive. It is His nature as well as His business to help the needy. Why did Christ not say,

"I am come to associate with the nobles, to feast with the rich, to talk with governors and princes and kings?" It was because He had no mission to men who did not need Him. But the broken hearted, those without hope, how His heart went out to them! It was the opportunity for His power to be revealed. He would now prove His mission, as well as to help the needy.

A beautiful vase, said to be the most beautiful of its kind in the world, was not widely known until it was broken into a hundred pieces by the

careless act of a drunkard. Then the most exquisite colouring and the most beautiful decoration was for the first time revealed in the broken edges. It was carefully cemented together and is now kept in the British Museum of London, as one of the most precious articles of all that great collection. This Portland vase is of vastly greater worth since it was broken, for its preciousness was thus revealed.

May it not be so with the human soul? Not only our own greatness but also the infinite goodness of Christ is revealed in our recovery from sin. Christ is the one who will not only restore life to its former beauty, but will make it far more beautiful than man has ever known in his best moments. He is ever willing to heal the broken hearted.

It is said that a young woman one day entered an insane asylum to see if there was anyone there whom she might help. She was taken to the room of a poor girl, who had been a long time in that pitiable condition, and who stood most of the time looking out of the window. The doctor said, "Speak to her." She advanced and laid her hand on the girl's arm and said something. At once the insane girl turned and burst into tears. the doctor exclaimed, "Thank heaven, she can be cured." And she was. No one could recall the words spoken. It was the touch of sympathy that gave hope and recovery. So Christ has come with His boundless sympathy to win us to

Himself and so to heal the broken hearted. All who feel this touch may meet the opening year and the coming century in the bright light of hope and with the anthem of praise.

"Not wholly lost O Father,
Is this evil world of ours,
Upward through its blood and ashes,
Spring afresh the Eden flowers."

II. "Deliverance to the captives," was the second part of Christ's great program.

At this time the prisons of Palestine were crowded with prisoners. Yet Christ did not free them, for they were suffering the penalty of the law for crimes committed and He would not interfere with the civil law. He came not to change institutions but to change men, not to work with the masses but with the individual. His wonderful discourse on the new birth was given to one man, that is, to Nicodemus; His matchless sermon on the water of life was preached to the woman at the well at Sychar; His immortal teaching on the resurrection to the weeping sister of Lazarus, and most of His other discourses were to the chosen few. The captivity to which He refers is not that of the foreign foe, or the prison cell, but that of the mind and soul to sin. And this is the worst kind of bondage as the history of the world proves. Stephen was stoned not by men of abandoned life, but by those like Saul of

Tarsus, who were in captivity to wrong beliefs; as Paul in after life said in regard to this very crime, "I verily thought I did God service." Savonarola was executed by men who were in many ways noble, but who were in bondage to error. Christ Himself was crucified by men who were bound by the letter of the law. It is from the captivity of sin that Christ has come to set us free. Yet the world has not learned the lesson. We are still bound by our particular beliefs and are constantly trying to bring all things, even the providence of God into harmony with these. It is often said,

"If I were God I would have things different in this world. I would start a revolution going, which would sweep away all evil doers. I would command the lightning out of the sky to strike down him who is unjust. There would be no more inequalities between man and man, for the good should have all the wealth and the wicked all the poverty, and I would write my demands across the sky and keep that page open forever."

And because God does not manage the world according to such whims, man submits to the bondage of unbelief, which may bind him in chains forever.

The farmer sows his seed in the field and it lies hidden in the grasp of the cold earth until the sun comes with his warmth of light, hunts for it, finds it, and stirs it into life. It is the sun that breaks the shell of the seed and sets the germ

free. Not according to the law of the seed alone but rather according to the great providence and power of the sun which wakes it to life. Thus the seed sown in our hearts, lies dormant in the conditions and circumstances of life until Christ who is our life, comes to bring forth all that is good and great in us, not according to the narrow laws of our own natures, but according to His own blessed will. This is the greatest deliverance that can come to the captive for "Whom Christ makes free he shall be free indeed."

III. "To give sight to the blind," is the third part of the great program of life.

Of what use is freedom without sight. A blind man must be led by the hand lest he stumble and fall. But if his sight be restored he can find his way alone anywhere. Israel, liberated from bondage in Babylon, needed sight by which they might go over hills, and through valleys, and across rivers to their own land. So the progress of Christ's mission is logical, for no sooner is freedom granted than there is also given the keen vision that goes far beyond that of the natural eye.

There is a noted painting by a famous artist, which represents a blind girl sitting by the entrance of the Catacombs and holding a taper to the traveller who is about to enter the darkness of those ancient homes of the martyrs. This ap-

parent paradox has its reality in the outer world every day. The one who may be blind to the world's power and fame, may furnish readily the light for the explorer of divine things. There is a difference then between the natural and the spiritual vision and the latter is of infinitely greater importance.

Man is constantly sacrificing the sight of the eye to that of the mind and soul. In one of our large colleges last year, the senior class had 43 per cent. of their number who wore eye glasses. One half of these began to wear them after they were well advanced in their course. That is, as the sight of the mind grew keener, the sight of the eye suffered. The savage may see eight, ten or fifteen miles over the prairie, but not an inch in mathematics. The scholar may see but a little way along the surface of the earth, but he sees millions of miles in astronomy.

Old Homer was blind to this world, but he saw what no one else could see in classic poetry, and pictured what no one else could paint in classic life.

John Milton was blind to earth but he saw Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained as no other human eye ever saw it.

Christ never promised to heal every blind man when He was on earth, nor did He do it; and those whom He did heal were examples of the great healing power in the divine life. There was many a man when Christ walked upon the

earth, blinder than Bartimeus. They looked at Christ and then asked,

"Art thou He that should come, or look we for another." The answer was, "Come and see." And as they looked they saw One whom the world loves because He will not cheat the blind, because they are blind; or outrun the lame because they are lame, or push aside the palsied because they are helpless. Ah, there is a new vision of a new life. This is seeing the truth incarnate that we may live it, seeing mercy that we may love it, seeing salvation that we may accept it. This is the restored vision in the program of Christ.

Men place lamps at the street corners not because travellers have no eyes but rather because they have, and are expected to use them. God has set His revelation along the highway of the soul, because man has and should use his spiritual vision.

You are walking carelessly along the street some dark night when some one suddenly rushes out from the side and trips you. After that you have your eyes about you that you may not again suffer.

So as you are hurrying along life's pathway, some one rushes out and brings you to the ground. For the first time you see plainly, and behold the culprit is an ancestor, fulfilling the fourth commandment which says, that the "Sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children unto

the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me." This is what they call Heredity, and by it we learn that we may be wronged by our ancestors as well as by our co-temporaries, and the business of the new vision is to show us where the danger is.

It is supposed by many that Paul's thorn in the flesh was weak eyes. It is quite certain that his eyes were so weak that he had to have an amanuensis. And when he did write one epistle himself, he called special attention to it and said, "See with what large letters (characters) I have written unto you with mine own hand." He who could see so poorly with the natural vision, was caught up to the third heaven and saw things which human language could not describe, and which the human mind could not comprehend.

There is many a poor soul rejected of men and bound to the daily drudgery, who sees further in the glories of God than can earth's wisest philosopher. There are parents and Sabbath School teachers who have keener vision in spiritual things than all the kings and queens of earth, because Christ has given them the true recovery of sight.

IV. "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord," is the fourth part of the great program of Christ.

It is hard to find any time that is acceptable to man. There is always something wrong with the

days; they are too hot or too cold, too long or too short. Yet God finds an acceptable year. He is less critical and more charitable toward us than we are toward Him, and yet He is perfect and we are not. The disciples at one time could not bear the men who did not do as they wished, and so they asked Christ,

"Wilt Thou that we command fire to come down out of heaven and consume them?" But Christ rebuked them and taught them to honour any man who did a noble deed, whatever was his method. Any victory for good is acceptable to the Lord.

The acceptable year to the Jews was the year of Jubilee, when slaves were freed and debts were paid and claims were settled and rewards were given for all service and joy was the key note of all life. Christ holds this up as the hope of the Christian era, and no year has so good a right to it as this the opening year of the century.

"The acceptable year of the Lord?" Why did He stop there? Why did He not read the rest of the sentence, as He was reading about Himself from the Prophecy of Isaiah? Why did He not read, "And the day of vengeance of our God?"

Because He came to destroy vengeance which He put away in Himself, for all who will believe and trust Him. He broke a sentence in two in order to leave that out. It is not that God's anger is cold or His wrath dead. No, no. But Christ

was there to receive the effect of God's vengeance in Himself. It was Christ's sacrifice that made the time acceptable unto God. His whole life led up to this. When He preached, when He worked miracles, when He moved the hearts of His followers, He studied not so much to be pleasing to the people as to be acceptable to the Father; and He never failed. He can as easily make our lives as acceptable to the Father, and that is His mission. All of our hopes of happiness are here for the acceptable time to God is when our lives are in harmony with His plan. Hence He looks more at the attitude than at the action.

The acceptable time in the family is when the children are all in loving accord with the hopes and desires of the parents. The acceptable time to the business man is when all in his employ are earnestly striving to carry out the great schemes he has set agoing. The acceptable time in the Church is when there is peace and harmony of effort in executing God's purpose.

God's great will is not that we should struggle against Him or against circumstances, but that we should accept the divine plan and enjoy His favour always. What can a passenger do on a great ocean steamer in time of a storm? Can he stay with his uplifted hand the oncoming gale? Can he with his breath blow back the fierce flying wind? Can he hold and guide the great ship when he has no power over it and does not know

distances or directions and when the stars are shut out by dense darkness? No! He can not, nor will he try. He can only obey the captain who has mastered the sea in a thousand storms. He is acceptable to the captain when he is obedient to the great power which safely holds and guides the ship.

So the acceptable year of the Lord, which Christ came to preach, and which all of His heralds since have proclaimed, is the time when Christ fulfills His program, completes His plan for our lives, and brings peace to the soul no matter what may have been the storms raging about us.

We stood beneath one of the great echo domes of the old world and made sounds, some musical, some discordant; but they all came back as sweet music. The harsh and discordant sounds were changed to harmony and rhythm; the musical to sweeter music, because only such sounds could come from that beautiful dome. There is an echo dome of God above us all and when we stand in the right place in His province, we shall hear only the sweet strains of the glad Jubilee of God, the acceptable year of the Lord, the fulfillment of the divinely arranged program of life.

IV

LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD

"For we are labourers together with God; ye are God's husbandry; ye are God's building."—*1 Corinthians 3: 9.*

THERE is everywhere a definite belief that God is in the world executing His own will. On no other theory can we explain the flow, the change, and the transformation of history. But how near does God come to men and events, and for what? These are the questions of the morning. And they are answered very plainly in the text.

I. "YE ARE LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD."

Then God comes into personal contact with all, and into special relation to those that love Him. The destiny of a man who is loyal to God is linked with the divine nature. Such a one has the special attention of the God of the universe, the One in whom he may find whatever is needful in the daily life.

Leading up to a city of Austria is a bridge in the parapets of which are many statues of Christ. One represents Him as the Sower. And as the farmer goes by in the early morning, he stops to do honour to Him in whose hands are the winds

and the rain and the germs hidden in the seed. Another statue represents Christ as the Carpenter, and as the workman goes by he stops to worship Him who said,

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it." Then there is the statue of the great Physician who is the human healer's model and inspiration as he hurries along on his mission of mercy. And later in the day when the sun has kissed away the dew from the grass, the sick and discouraged come to thank Him for help, who is Physician of both soul and body. So in the bridge every form of life may find represented a Saviour to suit his need.

In the approach to the next world, nay in every avenue of this life there is the presence of the infinite God, for the needy time of every soul. As truly as Christ talked with Mary at the tomb and she knew Him not, and stood on the banks of the sea of Galilee and watched the disciples fishing and was by them unobserved, and walked with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus and was taken for a traveller, so truly is He with us watching us in every move, walking with us by the way and talking with us in the trying moments of life. It is then our business to learn that we are labourers together with God.

But how are we to be labourers together with God? In the easiest and simplest way, that is by finding His will and plan for us and conforming to it just as nearly as we can.

How does a man grow strong after the physician has killed the disease in him? He has had a hard fight and though he won, the fierceness of the struggle has left him very weak. Does he now come back to health by breaking every law of body and mind? No, but rather by keeping every law and becoming in the very simplest way a worker together with God. So in the spiritual life, we bring these powers up to God by being obedient to His will and so gaining divine power.

A century ago there was a great discovery made, that of the planet Neptune. And how was this made? Did Le Verrier the astronomer look and look till he saw it with the naked eye? Did he build a very high scaffolding to come nearer to the planet? No, for these are unreasonable ways. But he did take the laws written in the sky, and in lines and angles, and as taught in mathematics, and studied to bring himself into conformity with these as one would study the laws of God in His holy Word to know the divine will. And when he did so he said,

"There, at a certain point 2,862,457,000 miles away from the sun and in longitude 326 degrees must be a planet. The agitation among the heavenly bodies shows it." Just so one studying God's Word would say,

"There must be a Saviour, for the agitation in human experience shows it."

So they turned their telescope to the place designated as in accordance with God's plan of the

heavens, and behold the planet flashed in view just where God's law said it would. Le Verrier who made the computation was a worker together with God. He found God's plan and conformed to it.

There was no change in the heavens. The planets wheeled on just the same. Neptune suffered no jar when it was discovered. The change was all in the astronomer Le Verrier, for he brought himself into conformity with the laws and will of God.

Now it is the essence of religion that we put ourselves in line with God's nature and plan. That is what we find in this story. One said,

"I am of Paul," the great debater and Christian logican. Another said, "I am of Apollos," the great Christian orator. But Paul said,

"You have missed the meaning, for what matters it whether it be of Paul or of Apollos or Cephas? These are only ministers, but Christ giveth the increase." It is the union of effort each striving for the divine approval that brings success to any work.

Let us through much prayer and the constant study of God's Word learn His will as Le Verrier found it in the sky. There we shall be able to lead others in the way of life.

The Church is the great school of God where we shall come into the power of seeing eternal things. When we shall learn to be forbearing and forgiving and helpful, where we shall have

the clear vision by which we shall see further into the mysteries of God than Le Verrier saw into the sky when he discovered the planet Neptune. We shall count these privileges of the church essential in our development of manhood and womanhood for eternity. We shall consider that we have lost something which can never be recovered when we have missed the services. We shall pray for one another that in the union of heart and hand we shall come into the largest power.

The French do not usually say that they are going to church but rather that they are going to assist in the service. It is a beautiful saying which clearly states that the Master needs us as really as we need Him. A union of the human and the divine is necessary to the best results in life.

Labourers together with God? It is well that it is so. If God were labourer together with us, then we would have the greater responsibility, but as it is God bears the greatest responsibility, for we are labourers together with Him.

He ought then to have His way. The child goes to his father and says,

"Papa, I will do just as you say! You may plan my life with your greater wisdom and tell me what to do and I will do it." Then will that father plan the worst sort of life of sin and suffering for that boy? Will he treat him cruelly? Remember that he is that boy's father and these

questions will be answered in your heart even before you speak. As soon as we conform in spirit, in love, and life to God's will and plan, we have a Father, perfect in love and justice who does all that we will let Him do, for our joy and happiness and progress in righteousness.

We have a large number of explicit statements from Him to this effect.

"All things work together for good to them that love Him, and to them who are the called according to His purpose." "Will a mother forget her little babe?" "Yes, she may, but I will not forget thee. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." Yes, God has a deep personal interest in us.

But the Christian life, this working together with God, is not to be a life of idleness, but one of tireless activity in the same direction in which God is busiest, that is, in saving life. If there is anything that makes a man sad it is that his son is leading a desecrated, disgraceful, and wasting life. He, as father, has spent a great deal of time and money to bring that boy to a pure, noble manhood. Yet it is all in vain. Over and over you will hear him say.

"I would rather he had died," and he really would. It is the wasted life that hurts the father. If God is ever sad it must be at ruined life. He longs for it, He waits for it, He works with it.

Then He expects us to work with Him. When one of the family is lost all the rest turn out to hunt for him. So God would have us work for the recovery of lost life. He has done His part in the work and sacrifice of his Son. Shall we do ours?

If Christ's mission was great, yours is also great. What would you think of a Saviour who would come from the sky to save Himself all the trouble and suffering possible—that we might bear it? You would not think much of such a Saviour. And yet that is the position we assume. We try to save ourselves. We try to gain all the pleasure we can, even at the expense of others. A poor sort of physician would he be who would not go to help the sufferer, because it cost him some time, even though the patient could not pay him in money. There is a universal feeling among men that suffering must be relieved, and that man has a large part in the work.

With all our powers we should bend to this task of preaching and living a helpful gospel, one that will ever witness to the Saviour of men.

A young man in New York has rescued twenty people from drowning at one of the piers. He says he wants to live until he saves one hundred. He chooses work near the water, where his hands are busy with his daily toil until he hears the cry of the drowning, then he rushes forth, leaving all to save life. O that we might be filled with the same burning zeal to rescue the perishing.

So God has given us the beautiful mission of saving life and lifting it to the divine companionship, where "We are labourers together with God."

II. "Ye are His husbandry."

Then God works specially upon the hearts and lives of His followers. This is not strange. You would expect God to have some way of expressing Himself to the world.

There are ways of working upon the minds of others. One in speaking to an audience works somewhat upon the minds of the hearers. The teacher in the school tills soil as truly as the gardener cultivates his garden; but the teacher tills the soil of the mind. So it is that God is the worker in the world in a strange and mysterious way. As the child in school does not know that his mind is being cultivated, because he does not know the process, so we may be ignorant of God's way, and yet the truth stands. O how wonderful is God, that He should come to us to teach us His will and His way. O that He should consider our hearts His place to work! O that He should drive out the evil, the low, the sensual and put in their place all that is good and true and beautiful. It is His tillage and it is His right.

But the other half of this truth is that He works not only upon man's heart, but upon the world through human agency.

The history of the world is one long testimony to this great fact. The discovery of America had to wait for man. Inventions also, and the power of rapid transportation, and all had to wait for man, and God only worked through him to accomplish these things.

In like manner the reason why missions have gone slowly is because God has had poor material to work with, or not enough of what was good. Africa and India and China, and all other mission fields will be won for Christ just so sure as there are enough consecrated lives on whom God can work in converting these peoples.

And this is not without its lesson to us. There are here within the range of this church many on whom God will work, but it must be through us. Shall we be willing? Shall we be God's husbandry?

"Shall we whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted, the Lamp of life deny?

III. "YE ARE GOD'S BUILDING."

This is the completed work. There now it stands for approval.

Paul used this figure because some of the most beautiful buildings of the day were in Corinth, and these Corinthians to whom he wrote these words, would at once see the lesson. It is as though he were with them, and he had pointed to those magnificent structures whose beauty is

still known the world over in the Corinthian style of architecture, and had said: "See, there is the best that man can do. That is the glory of the whole earth. But ye are the architecture of God, made by His own hand, and ye are the glory of heaven."

O it is precious to know that God is bringing us to completion, and that e'er long, we shall stand forth with finished work, and He shall say of this new creation as He said of the old,

"It is very good."

No longer may it be said: "You are the architect of your own fortune," but rather. "We are God's building." Now we know why life has not gone just as we had planned. Now we know why one room in the heart is large and another small, why there has been clay used sometimes where we would rather have had granite. It is because God has the plans, and He is bringing the building to completion to suit Himself; and why not, for He alone knows how to build for eternity. To know that e'er long we shall be His building, completed according to the divine plan, to know that there will be nothing kept that ought to be lost, and nothing lost that should be kept—this is our inspiration for to-day, for this life and for eternity.

During a little rest from the hard work of busy pastorates my friend and I were travelling in the mountains of old Virginia. As night came on,

we turned aside from the country road to a beautifully lighted house. We wondered why the lights were burning so brightly. We went to the door and asked for lodging. My name somehow attracted the attention of the fine looking gentleman who met us and we were invited in, and enjoyed all the great hospitality of that beautiful home.

Then we learned why there was rejoicing there and why the lights were all burning. The gentleman who entertained us was one of the most noted sculptors of the land. He had just completed a statue of the great General, Robert E. Lee, and he was rejoicing in his triumph. He told us about his trials, his discouragements, his difficulties. But these after all only seemed incidents to the one great event, for the next day the statue was to be unveiled before the great throng of witnesses.

So one day the brilliant light of God shall shine upon this dark world in commemoration of a great event. How long it has taken to come to this moment. With what infinite pains all has been done. Man would have given up the work long ago, but God is never discouraged. And now it is done, the workmanship of God, *yourself,* for "ye are His workmanship, created anew in Christ." We shall be unveiled in eternity, in the great throng of witnesses which no man can number, in the brilliant light of heaven before the throne of God, and hearing the words. "Ye are His workmanship." "Ye are complete in Him."

V

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."—*Romans 1: 16.*

THE greatest power in the world is not that of steam or electricity or dynamite, or even of the newspaper, which is the power of man unto education; but it is the Gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, the good news from Heaven.

Nothing so moves the world as news. The story of invention, of discovery, of philanthropy, of heroism, of the nation's prosperity, of the success of the army and navy, fascinates the world and makes of every man's face a question mark, and his life an expression of hunger more intense than that of the half-starved body for food. Good news arouses the stupid, interests the intense, cheers the discouraged, lifts the brow of hope, and swings open the door of life to a successful future. Can anything do more than this, which seems the limit of possibility?

The text answers, yes. For there is one power greater than any or all of these. It is the power of the Gospel of Christ to every one who believes.

It is that which pieces out the small possibility in the human life and makes us acceptable above. It is the new power in the world, for it was introduced after the creation was finished and when our first parents had disobeyed God and found themselves in sin. Their question then was, "How may we come again into right relations with God?"

The answer came quickly from God, as out of an open sky: "Right relations with the Almighty may again be established through Christ, who is the power of the Gospel of God, for He is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

This is the ever-living question, and this, too, is the never changing answer.

It is the new and supreme power in the world. Yet it does not attempt to manage commerce, or run railroads, or print newspapers, or rule governments. These and ten thousand other things are assigned to man.

But this power of the Gospel of Christ comes to do what has never been done aside from it and that which no other power can accomplish. And what is this?

I. To bring the story of pardon, is the first great power of the Gospel.

The cry of every life from Eden to the present moment is for pardon. All voices utter it, all ears hear it and no noise of earth can still this

cry. Ever and anon it goes up from the imprisoned human soul.

A man walks out of the presence of the officials, having paid the penalty of his crime in money or in daily toil, and is called a free man. But if that is all, he is not free. He is as much bound in soul as ever, for all that judge and jury and civil law can do relates only to his circumstances, to his conditions in the world. But sin is not so much a thing of outer conditions as of inner life, which civil law can not reach.

A man is not free simply because he can walk the streets and has the liberty of coming and going as he may please. Sin is not only a crime against man, but also against God. Sin has so taken hold of the inner life that we can not breathe it out of us at will, or work it off by some form of exercise, or cast it aside as we would discard a wornout garment. And the world, with its myriad discoveries and inventions, has not found any way by which it may relieve the human soul of this burden of guilt.

The world is more concerned with this question than with any or all others. It writes its story on the careworn face of the mother, who in her deep poverty wonders if it is wrong to do some things which men usually condemn that she may get bread for the children. It follows the young man to his poorly furnished room after he has been obliged to do a dishonest thing rather than lose his position. It faces the young woman

when temptations come like a mighty rolling sea. It goes on up into the great store and the elegantly furnished office, where the race for wealth goes on the swift wings of electricity, and where men hurl the human voice half way across the continent to complete a bargain that may have in it millions of dollars and millions of human lives.

The court of conscience is yet to be passed. No human barrister, in his own strength, has ever won a single case here; no human appeal has yet stayed a single proceeding, no plea of pity has ever moved a single feature in the face of this stern Judge, and not all the earth's riches has ever moved Him from the right so much as the breadth of a hair. Socrates says these facts must be reckoned with as much as the laws of heat and cold, and all human experience shows that he was only speaking the solemn truth of God.

A short time ago there appeared in the papers the account of a man who came from somewhere in the West, 2,000 miles to Boston to request that he be declared guilty and made to serve out a sentence for a crime. Yet no police authority had ever laid a hand on him, no jury had ever heard his case, no Judge in earthly court had ever pronounced sentence upon him. But he had for years been before the court of conscience, where he found sheriff, judge and jury all in one, and had been condemned.

A more powerful court it was than any of earth, and it was the only one which could lead the man to true liberty. In such a case it seems almost a pleasure for a man to confess, because in it he has found the pardon of God, the power of God unto salvation.

Yes, the tragedies of life have been along this line, and the masterpieces of literature have told the same story, as in the writings of Sophocles, Dante, Milton, Goethe, Byron and Shakespeare. But no man has found a relief. That is furnished by the Gospel of Christ, which is the power of the pardon of God to every one that believes.

Look at it! Sin is a power to be reckoned with in your life, and there must be a greater power to oppose and destroy it. The theory of medicine to-day, is not to try to educate a man out of the disease which has taken fast hold upon him, but to provide something that will destroy the disease. This is true also in the case of sin. Christ is the counter force, the supreme power who has come to break the power of sin and grant pardon. His cure is that of divine surgery. It is treatment if possible, amputation if necessary, but always the exercise of a power far beyond that of man. His miracles show this, for they are lessons in His sin-destroying power. He restored alike the man who was born blind, the leper, the palsied, the possessed with a devil, without asking any reward in return. He was not willing that there should be deformity in the

human body, nor is He willing that there shall be weakness and sin in the spiritual nature. So He longs to pardon and free from guilt all who will believe in Him. Others may diagnose the case, He alone can cure.

He is the one who pleads our cause before the tribunal of Conscience as well as before the bar of God. He has never lost a case. He has always, when allowed by us, procured a stay of proceedings and secured a pardon, making us acceptable to ourselves and to the Father. This is what gives us true happiness, energizing us with divine life, and setting our lives in harmony with God's life, so that we approach more nearly to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Will such a power, wonderful and supreme, ever fail to be helpful? No, not

> "As long as the heart has passions,
> As long as life has woes."

For this is the power of God to every one that believeth.

II. To bring the story of salvation is the second great mission of the Gospel.

This does not mean merely salvation from death, but also from sin and all its forces. It is the great interest of salvation to see that life grows larger and larger. That this may be possible there must be that intimate and immediate

union with Christ which Paul always preached and which every healthy Christian enjoys. It is granted "To every one who believeth," as the rest of the text states. The first act of salvation is only the beginning of a life which is to continue forever in goodness and greatness. That is what life is for, to increase and expand and enlarge.

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit," said Christ in one of His greatest discourses. Hence the Gospel is not only the story of pardon, but also the story of that which keeps a man, and saves his life after he is forgiven.

The difference between saving the soul and saving the life, is that of saving the seed planted in the earth with the earth itself, and saving the harvest that may grow from the seed. The farmer is concerned with the seed and the field of course, because without them he could not have a harvest. But he is far more concerned with what the seed will produce. So God is concerned with the saving of the soul, that is the establishing of right relations between Himself and the lost, but He is far more concerned with what that life will produce in all the future ages of its endless existence. He would not have gone to so much trouble and expense to save man if He had not wanted life to develop into something greater and larger through all time and eternity.

In this the world gives man no help, unless it has received its lessons from the Gospel. Books

and papers are silent upon this great subject unless they have learned their lessons from the one infallible source. The man who sins and keeps on sinning is at great odds. He has the Great God the forces of nature and the order of things against him. But the one who by the act of belief brings himself into union with Christ and by so continuing increases his security and his power for good, daily

"Overcomes the world."

This is the power of the Gospel of Christ and the power of the Christ of the Gospel,

"That lifts the fallen, cheers the faint,
Heals the sick and leads the blind."

It is the world power for it enters India and China and Japan and every other country and saves and builds up life wherever it may be found. That is a significant expression,

"Life saving," and it is not confined to any place or any country or any nation or any continent, but is used wherever an effort is put forth to recover life from destruction. But the further fact found in this divine salvation revealed in the Gospel is that the act of saving is not for the moment and is not to end with the loosening of the hold of evil but that then the great forces of good are to begin their work of recovery and growth. When the priest and the Levite went by the man who had been robbed on the highway,

the robbers had gone and the man needed no further defense from their dangerous attacks; but it was the Good Samaritan who took the man and set him on his own beast and took care of him that the man might come back to useful life. This is a picture of Christ in the advanced stages of salvation where life that is saved is to have the best chance that a God can give it.

The seaman by the sea saves a man from drowning not because the man to be saved, believes one thing or another, but because life is precious; and we all recoil from its destruction, because when it is once saved it is expected to be useful in its further growth. Thus God has written in human life the lesson of His own great Gospel, that life is to be saved, that it may grow and increase in righteousness through all eternity.

It is in this way that God expects to have His reward for the great work of salvation. If man were never to be more than he is when he is converted, he would not in any way pay for the trouble. If a child were to remain forever in the helpless pulpy state in which he is born he would not be a very welcome visitor in the family. As the chief delight of the parents is to see the child grow and become large and great, so the great delight of God is to see the rapid and sure growth of those who are redeemed from the power of sin.

Did you ever have something suddenly happen you by which you thought all the power and

vigour of life would be gone, and yet you would live on, a burden to yourself and a care to others? Then you have a vivid picture of what the destruction of life is by the power of sin. Then did you hear them say,

"O he will recover and be as well as ever, for the treatment has been successful?"

And this is the illustration of the divine impulse of eternal hope, in the redeemed life and the opening of the way for the large development of the immortal soul. All acts of life are somehow related to the future of the soul, so that we instinctively say,

"If I had not been saved, if I had not had my life so developed I never could have done this or that, I never could have been so happy, I never could have gained these lasting victories."

There is no life in human form so low that God does not love it and try in every possible way to bring it back to power, so long as any hope or possibility is left. He cares for it as the fireman fans the flickering flame in which is all his hope for a blazing fire.

The other day while riding in a car in our city I saw a sign which read,

"Second hand building material for sale here."

I wondered why that should not be written over the habitation of every human being. "Second hand building material!" What else are we? What man or woman has not tried to work out

his own life for himself or herself? We wrote in our copy books when we were in school,

"Man is the architect of his own fortune."

We tried it and failed, at least in the spiritual life. We had the material, but in building the eternal habitation of the soul we failed. So we have wisely turned all over to the Master Builder as second hand material. Much of it He has had to destroy. But with the rest He is doing the best that a God can do. The process has been long and somewhat painful but always successful. And when the work is well on the way He shows what He has done and says,

"Ye are the temple of the Living God."

What! So changed as that? Has the purpose and skill and workmanship of the Master Builder power to so beautify and adorn and hallow and sanctify? It must be so, for this is the power of the Master and this is the story of the Gospel of Christ which is the Power of God unto the continuous salvation of body, mind and soul to every one that believeth. He is the Builder and yet we build larger and better than ever. He has great honour and yet we have greater honour than ever before. He has our lives and yet we have larger and better life than we have ever known.

III. The third power of the Gospel is that of belief.

There has lately come into the world a gospel of electricity. What good news to us that we can

talk with our friends hundreds of miles away, and even across the sea! What good news, that by electricity our work is made easier and travel a pleasure! Yet no one receives the benefit of this great power unless he uses it in his own behalf. Men wonder why it is that they do not enjoy the Gospel, and they have not stopped to think that it is because they have not applied it to their lives. Electricity is a dangerous force unless mastered, and yet men think that a still greater power may be fooled with now and then, and that they will receive from this the lasting benefits which only a thorough mastery can provide. Electricity can only when properly used take away the drudgery of physical life, while the power of the Gospel in Christ will, when properly applied, take away the power of sin, whose effect otherwise is eternal.

So the Gospel has proved its right to be called a world force. For eighteen hundred years it has held sway over the hearts of men, and has never failed in one thing where it had the chance it rightfully claims.

No great power of mechanics or work of science has ever existed without its gospel of authority. In mathematics we constantly turn to rules and figures. In chemistry we are ever using the formula and signs, and in astronomy, lines and circles. In the higher life we must constantly turn to our authority, to find how to work out the problems of authority, sorrow, perplexity, misfortune and of sin. And we are never disap-

pointed, for the Gospel of Christ is the power of God to every one who believes.

This is the story of all life. The ground opens its treasures to the farmer who believes with plow and harrow and daily toil, as well as with mind. The gold mine uncovers its riches to him who believes with pick and shovel. Education is only for him who believes in burning the midnight oil and in pouring over his books in ceaseless toil, by the hour and month and year. And God asks no more of religion.

What we want in religion as well as in everything else is certainty. Creed and confession, and theology are all very well in their several spheres; but when trial and temptation and grief come, then what? The most that these can do is to steady us for the time. It is the business of the Gospel to be at that point with its message of One who will never fail in any time of trouble or need. This is the way of authority. And authority refers to an Author. So I bring you the Author of all good, whose word never changes, whose power never fails and who holds us in the hollow of His hand.

Do you still ask that this be proved? Why, you believe in electricity and steam, and Astronomy and Chemistry, and yet you have never proved these. You take them on the authority of men who have made mistakes and confessed to it, men whose honesty and truthfulness you have never proved. Then why not take the Power of

the Gospel, which rests upon the authority of One who has never made one mistake in all time and eternity, and whose life goes unchallenged through eighteen hundred years?

There are two ways of crossing the ocean. We may take a row boat and go altogether in our own way. This way however is not thronged and has never been popular. The other is by way of the great steamship which baffles the waves and defies the storms. And this is the way that most of us favour. Yet this is the way of authority with which, in the arrangements, we have had nothing to do. We trust ourselves entirely to the plan, preparation and method of another.

There are in human experience two ways adopted by man for crossing the sea of life. There is the method one may choose for himself, that of self will, and of sin. If anyone has ever crossed in this way he has sent us no word, and many who have stopped on the further side of the journey have said it is a failure. The other method is that of the Gospel, that of the Christ, who never yet has failed, and in whom no one has yet been lost. This is the way of authority, the way of testimony, for the millions who have tried it testify to its safety. This is the power of the Christ written in the blessed Gospel which brings joy to the human heart, pleasure to the mind, ecstasy to the soul, and victory to the redeemed and enlarging eternal life. This is the way of authority which we love, for "it is the

Power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."

"We go the way our fathers went,
The way that leads from banishment,
The king's highway of holiness."

VI

THE RIGHTS OF A MAN BEFORE THE FACE OF THE MOST HIGH

"The Lord approveth not to turn aside the right of a man before the face of the Most High."—*Lamentations 3: 35.*

It was in a great court room of London and the accused was led before the bar of the nation. We heard the judge ask,

"What rights have you before this tribunal?"

"The right of life and justice," answered the prisoner.

Again the accused is at the bar (and this accused is every human being) and the Judge of all the earth, seated upon His throne, asks,

"What rights do you claim here?"

"The right of life, of choice, of justice, and of mercy," answers the other "for Thy law says, 'Thou wilt not turn aside the right of a man before the face of the Most High.'"

This question then goes far beyond mere human rights, which have ever been the subject of courts, and councils and conflicts on field of battle. The Continental Congress, Marathon, Inkerman, Waterloo and Gettysburg were all human courts of appeal; and all history is the account of one

long struggle to adjust human rights. Yet these questions have not all been settled for the door of court room is ever open and the judge is ever ready to receive the suppliant. And no wonder, for God has written no infallible Bible of mere human rights, but has left man to find and apply this truth for himself.

In this text we are brought up to the high level of the rights of a man before his Maker. To show what these are God has written a Book, the only one He has thought worth while to write. It is the largest and most complete of all records and one which will never be changed so long as time lasts and the human heart longs for help. In this book we learn that,

I. Life is the first right of a man before the face of the Most High.

The man who stood before the bar in the London court, had a right to live because he was a citizen of the nation and had not forfeited his right. He might have been in a foreign land, he might have been a cripple, and even imprisoned by an enemy in a foreign land, yet he could claim his right to the protection of his life even to the sacrifice of the army and navy of the nation.

Every man has the right to live because he is under the government of God whose great wish for all is that life shall prevail. Man may be degraded and dissipated, he may deface and disfigure himself, he may even be in the enemy's country

beset by those who would gladly destroy him, as in the case of the Prodigal, but so long as he is God's willing subject he has a right to claim life at the bar of the Judge of the universe. Man loses his life only when he disobeys God and breaks His laws. God's wish is that every man shall live and that he shall improve up to the limit of his possibility.

Will God allow the oak the right of life for centuries that it may increase in size and strength through that long period only to die again; will He protect the giant of the California forest for ages that its branches may reach the clouds and its roots spread over hundreds of feet of ground only to perish soon, all this outlay for so short a time, and then let man who is to live forever, fade away in a few short years, like some tender plant? No! no! a thousand times no! God has made every possible preparation for calling out and beautifying every power in man. The eye is suited to the light, the ear to sound, the hand to the mechanical appliances, the mind to the measureless possibilities of knowledge, and the soul to the infinite truth of eternal life.

By the soothing sunlight and the balmy air of spring God calls us away from wasting life. By the voice of the sounding sea does He take us from the wearing life in the crowded city to newer and fresher scenes. By the green of the hillside and the quiet of the mountain does God invite us to rest. By His spoken and written word,

and by every revelation are we assured of our right of life before the face of the Most High.

To prove its sacredness, God has set the severest penalties upon the destruction of life. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," is the law. No one shall destroy this gift of God and escape. The clothing upon your body, the fence around your garden, the house around your family, the protection around cities and nations, are only the outer expression of God's infinite care of that which is to Him most precious, that is life.

The Almighty provides all possible means, if man will only find them, for frightening away disease and for preserving life, that it may be crowned.

Yes, man has the right of life before the face of the Most High because he is made in the image of God. He is thus greater than all the destructive forces of nature, so far as continuance in being is concerned. His life is too large for him to confine, define or measure. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." No man can tell what is the meaning of the slightest movements of the jelly fish that quivers in the sunlight when left upon the sand by the receding wave. How much less then can he guess the issues of his own immortal life. But God knows and in order to settle the greatest question of all existence He sent His only Son that all who believe in Him and shape their lives accordingly might live forever in the glory of eternal righteousness. It will take end-

less ages to fulfill all the promises of growth and enlargement which are written even in the weakest human nature, and how much greater must be all that God has in store for those who love Him and are trying to obey His will.

Man then has a right to life before the face of the Almighty because of what he may be to the Creator. The photograph has a right to exist and to have the care of the one it represents, because it is the likeness of him who is to remain beyond the day and year and the passing life. The mirror has a right to exist because it will reflect at any moment the one who stands before it, thus fulfilling its mission. The child has a right to life and care and help in the family, because he is born in that family and has in him somewhere, somehow the likeness of his parents. Man the photograph of God, though very poor, the mirror into which the Infinite One may look and see, though dimly the outline of His own nature; man the child of God, so like his heavenly Father, though only as a babe in the family of God, looks up and says,

"I know that Thou wilt not turn aside the right of a man before the face of the Most High."

II. Freedom of choice is the second right of a man before the face of the Most High.

This has its emphasis in the thirty-fourth verse of this chapter, when it is said,

"The Lord approveth not to crush under His feet the prisoners of the earth."

That is, man may exercise his right of choice even when he is a prisoner at the bar. The accused in the court of London had done as he pleased. He had either broken or kept the law of the land. He could do either. As man stands before the Judgment bar of the ages, he is dignified with the same privilege of choosing for himself what God loves or what God hates.

There is not a single law relating to himself which man may not disobey, and there is not a law relating to himself which man may not by the help of God observe and keep. The earth and stars and suns and systems swing in their orbits through measureless space throughout the ages, never turning one hair's breadth from the command of God. They can do no other. They are appointed to obey perfectly the perfect will of God. Hence there is no jar, no disturbance of any kind only the music of the spheres, as when the "Morning stars sang together and all the sons of men rejoiced together." But when God speaks to man and says,

"Thou shalt," man may reply,

"I will" or "I will not," as it may please him. And the "will not" is what brings trouble and disaster and death into the world.

If a man chooses wrongly and goes on until he is confirmed in an evil state, he may have his way, and the Almighty can not prevent him from

his doom. God did all He could when He sent His Son to die that men might live, and when He throws around the subject, every possible influence for good. But in spite of all this man may oppose his will to God's and win; for God will not argue forever with any man. "My Spirit will not always strive with man." "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone," is yet sounding down the ages. And when man comes up for judgment before the bar of God he will see the justice of all that God has done for it rested upon the free choice of man, as is shown in that blood red tragedy of the ages on Calvary when the thief on the cross reproved his companion, saying,

"We suffer justly, but this man hath done nothing worthy of death." They had had their way and expected nothing except that which was given to them because of their choice. Even the Almighty can not save a man if he is not willing to be saved, for that would not be salvation. For salvation does not mean a mere change of locality as from earth to heaven, but rather a change of the inner condition of life to conform to the will and life of God. It is the will that brings about this change as it is the helm which turns the great ship away from the rocks and toward the safe haven. All who choose righteousness in Christ may realize the blessedness of the choice which is given us because God will not turn aside the right of choice before the face of the Most High.

III. The appeal to justice is the third right of a man before the face of the Most High.

This is conceded in verse thirty-six which says, "The Lord approveth not to subvert a man in his cause." That is, he may have his case heard in the court and receive simple justice if he will. There are those who say,

"I know God is just, therefore He will not condemn me." But if you depend on justice alone you will never escape. The murderer who comes before a court of justice and pleads for justice may think thus to escape. But the judge has absolute proof of his guilt, and therefore is compelled to pronounce sentence of death upon him, for justice requires the full penalty of the law.

"I did not ask to have sentence pronounced," said the murderer, "I only asked for justice."

"You are guilty," answers the judge (we are all guilty before God) "and justice demands punishment to the full extent."

So when men who deny God's right to their best service and have been all their lives against Him, cry out for justice they only ask for their punishment which is their doom. Only in mercy is there relief from the severe penalty of the law.

There was Judge Shaw of Boston, who some years ago, with trembling lip and tear stained face, was compelled to pronounce sentence upon his friend Professor Webster for the murder of

Dr. Parkman. Judge Shaw could do no other, for Professor Webster asked only for justice. If he had confessed his crime and asked for mercy it would no doubt have made a vast difference. No one has ever accused Judge Shaw of being unjust when he pronounced the sentence upon his friend. So those who hate God come up before Him to ask for justice they will compel the Almighty to pronounce sentence, because they have chosen that course. And if ever God weeps and if ever His great nature is shaken with paroxysms of grief, it will be when He must pronounce sentence of banishment upon those who are made in His image, and who have had every advantage to lead a noble life in a Christian land and yet who have chosen rather to be forever away from God. These are they who cry only for justice and who have not given God any chance to show mercy.

In all the ages, the justice of things has not gone beyond the prison and the scaffold. When Judge Shaw pronounced sentence upon Professor Webster he did not wipe out murder from the country. Justice still stands before every such offender to smite with iron hand as, long ago it smote upon the brow of Cain the first murderer. Courts and councils and armies have never changed the nature of things.

"But," you say, "justice means reward for what has been done."

"Certainly," says the judge, "it means reward

for the evil as well as the good. Now if you are estranged from God, away from His Church, seeking your own good, what reward do you expect? This is good as far as it goes, but it does not go beyond the circle of your own life and will not count on the balance sheet of eternity. For these things you have all your reward here and now. You have not enlisted in the cause of your God, you have not attempted anything without the bargain for an immediate payment, and justice takes you at your word.

"But I expect some reward."

"No, no," answers justice, "if you had done anything for your God you would have done it in His way for that is the best and only way. My way is the way of sentence and doom, and not of mercy." So any man may claim the right of appeal to justice, for God will not turn aside the right of a man before the face of the Most High.

IV. The appeal to mercy, is the fourth right of a man before the face of the Most High.

This is the universal note of harmony amid all discord, the one sweet strain which is bringing into unison all conflicts of earth that the soul may sing with joy the song of God. Listen,

"He will have compassion according to the multitude of His tender mercies." Mercy led God to suffer in the person of His Son and thus to

have compassion until the subject understands and accepts. For mercy is not merely help to the needy, else the lower order of animals would be the subjects of mercy. Mercy is help granted to the needy who hunger for the nature and love of God.

Here are two men in prison. They both long to be free. One wishes to escape so as to do injury to those who placed him there and to commit other crimes. To free him would not be a mercy but rather an injustice to the man himself as well as to others. But the other longs to be free that he may live a noble life, and repair some of the wrong he has done, that he may work for his own family and yet reclaim his name from disgrace. To free him is a mercy and every man who has a shadow of this great quality in his soul, will say that it is a blessed thing that he can have his freedom for this great object of life.

So when the great desire to be free from sin has also that longing to be more like God and also to bring others up to that state, God looks down in tenderness and will forgive anything in man that his great desire to live a righteous life may have a chance to be proved true.

The soul struggles against great odds to be free. Most men love righteousness, and would gladly follow it, but the body with all its downward tendencies is such a poor servant. Here is a great man with a palsied hand. His mind ever active cries out to the hand to write the great

thoughts which fill the soul. But the hand is helpless to act. The mind keeps calling,

"O hand, can you not serve me? Can you not act for me that I may fulfill my mission?" But the hand can not act. Then there comes along a great physician and seeing the struggle of the mind to do its work through the unwilling hand, takes pity on it and heals the hand. So the soul of man struggles against the sinful conditions and in vain appeals to the body and mind to help effectually. Then God in Christ, the great Physician, looks down in pity and cures the sinful life, though it has deserved only condemnation; and this is mercy.

A little while ago we were at war with Spain. After one great battle the whole Spanish army in Cuba and a large part of their navy was taken prisoners and at once sent to their homes across the sea. Why were they thus kindly treated? This was not a custom of war. They were our enemies. It had cost much money and many lives to capture these soldiers. Why then were they sent home at the expense of this nation? It was because the great heart of this nation could not bear to see them suffer away from their country and their homes. Their longings to go home, though not expressed, yet well known by this government was enough to lead to the great act of mercy. So they were sent home on condition that they would never again take up arms against this nation. And all Spain loved us for it.

Before God we are all captives of war. He is watching with infinite solicitude for our willingness to be loyal and for the promise that we will never again take up arms against Him. Then His great heart will forgive us and send us home to our Father's house, and to a great reward, though we deserve it not.

This right of man before the face of the Most High is the conferred right in Christ who by His own sacrifice has opened God's heart of pity.

Not long ago Aguinaldo, the rebel chief of the Philippine Islands was at large and fighting against our nation. Long was the search for him and many were the soldiers of our army who were sacrificed until he was at last captured. When taken to Manila, into the presence of the United States authorities, was he at once beheaded as mere justice would indicate? By no means. He was then and there given the privilege of swearing allegiance to the United States and received all that might be granted to a citizen of this country. And this he accepted in place of banishment from his native island.

Wondrous story of mercy this, that the nation should spend so much money, and sacrifice so many lives to catch the worst rebel, to bestow upon him pardon and the richest blessings. Yet this is only the story in faint outline of God's mercy to us. He has gone to infinite expense and the sacrifice of His only Son that we might be presented with the richest blessings of heaven.

He follows along the way of life nearly to the end, through the long and lonely years until we are captured far away. Then we have His favour and His love though we deserve only condemnation. And this is the story of mercy in Christ.

A man once had a dream that he was in a fierce wild storm. Near by were some houses to which he ran for shelter. At the door of the first stood a man with a stern countenance, who asked him who he was and what he would have, and then stated that that was the house of justice, and that no traveller could expect comfort, but rather condemnation there. He ran to the next and was told that it was the house of truth, and as he had never loved truth he could not enter. At the third he could not be received because it was the house of peace and they did not wish to be disturbed. But when he came to the fourth he learned at once that it was the house of mercy, whose door is ever open and where One in bright raiment with marks in His hands ever stood to receive all who might flee there for shelter. So he was received without question, without money and without price.

The dream is a picture of man seeking and finding his greatest privilege, that of salvation through mercy in Christ, and which we may claim as a conferred right before the face of the Almighty, Most High.

L. of C.

VII

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS, OR HOW TO KEEP YOUNG

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."—*Ecclesiastes 11: 9.*

"REJOICE, O young man!" How easy to do, for there is no time so full of joy and happiness as youth. It is the living force of growth and progress which carries onward the throbbing life of the whole world. It urges the apprentice to his task, the business man to his office, the student to his books, and the whole world to tireless activity. Youth always sees before him the great, the good, the beautiful. His face is toward the sun and his shadow is behind him. His life is like the silent powerful oak which lifts and throws aside whatever may be upon it, as it rises from the acorn. The youth mounts upward and keeps ever climbing, always sure he sees the top, and is never in fear of falling. His prospects outnumber the stars, his hopes are swifter than the winged lightning, and his faith can remove mountains. If one-tenth of his dreams came true, there

would be poets everywhere, heroes would march along our streets in regiments, and discoverers would be as plentiful as the leaves on the trees, wealth could be supplied in packages like patent medicine, power would flow from fountains by the wayside, and greatness would be a drug on the market. With one hope realized in every ten, with one effort successful in every twenty, and with only half of his faith alive, youth rules the world, with absolute sway.

Longfellow tells this beautiful story in the following lines,

"How beautiful is youth! how bright it gleams
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams!
Book of beginnings, Story without end,
Each maid a heroine, and each man a friend!
Aladdin's Lamp, and Fortunatus' Purse,
That hold the treasures of the universe!
All possibilities are in its hands,
No danger daunts it and no foe withstands;
In the sublime audacity of faith,
'Be thou removed,' it to the mountain saith,
And with ambitious feet secure and proud,
Ascends the ladder leaning on the cloud."

That this desire for youthful happiness is immortal is proved by the universal effort of man to keep young; by man's ceaseless effort in all the ages, to find the fountain of perpetual youth; and by this command of God that we should make the rejoicing in righteousness strength, a life business.

I. Making the most of developing life, is the first secret of happiness.

"Rejoice O young man in thy youth." This is God's benediction on growing life. It pleases God to see life increasing in greatness and holiness. He is the last being to suppress life, as He is the only one to create it. He protects the humblest flower by the wayside hidden in the grass, from the biting frost. He stays the force of the storm which fain would lay the forest low. He holds back the hand of decay from the dying grain of wheat that it may spring forth with new life in the harvest of summer. He drives back cruel fate from the door of the drunkard, and from the hut of the poor, and from the closely guarded cell of the criminal that life may live on and have a chance to become supreme.

Yes He does more than that, He sends the bursting life of spring into every leaf and flower and twig and tree to cry out with joy for Him. He sends the birds with sweeter songs than Mendelssohn ever knew, to sing His chorus everywhere. He opens the day with His banner of beauty in the clouds and flings its colours again across the sky at sundown, and everywhere it is rejoice, rejoice—all things rejoice.

"Let all that hath breath praise the Lord."

In human life God's provision for happiness is more complete. Man's powers and capabilities outnumber all those of all other created things. His intellect sweeps the heavens and the earth,

far and wide, his sensibilities feel the throb of all life, low and high, and his will rules all things with a relentless sway; and God says,

"Use all things wisely and well and rejoice O young man, in thy strength," which does not mean the young in years so much as the one full of moving, pulsating, powerful life.

It is life that pushes and goes and loves and sings and wins. Life—strong life—is always rejoicing. Only death—the absence of life—brings sorrow. Every man therefore who fills himself full of life—God's life—will rejoice; *must* rejoice.

Does God then want a man to stop his work, to fill his lungs full of air in the morning and cry only—Halleluiah!"

O, No. When God says "rejoice O young man in thy youth," He means that we are to make the most of every power. We are to work as hard as we can, to fill the world full of righteousness. God is the happiest being in the universe, first because He is perfect; second because He does most for those in need. But in order to be happy God does not sit in the heavens and laugh and laugh as though He would shake the sky from its fastenings. But His nature rises in greatness and goodness and kindness and mercy, and these are the expressions of His joy. In imitation of Him we rise from the thought that life is to be one long holiday, and rejoice in our intellectual powers, in our opportunities for improvement and ad-

vancement, and in our highest possibilities before God.

II. Heart cheer, is the second secret of happiness.

"Let thy heart cheer thee," not thy neighbours or friends. It is well to know that the source of human happiness is the individual heart. Conditions of climate and weather are not half so important as the condition of the inner life. The good cheer of the heart is infinitely better than the sunshine or balmy air of spring.

Lately some strange experiments have been made in this country at a school for the study of the mind. A man in pleasant mood breathed into a glass tube prepared for the purpose and packed in ice, and then the iodide of rhodopsin was used to precipitate any deposit, but there was no result. Then a man when very angry was made to breathe into the same tube and the same test was applied, and the result was a brown precipitate. Then a man in deep sorrow was subjected to the same test and the result was gray; then one in remorse and the result was pink. In each special case the heart sent out some kind of a reporter to tell the story of this life. This is being done in a thousand other ways every day. Somehow man's inner condition has great effect on his happiness or misery. You go to a physician for a physical examination. After it is all over the physician says,

"Your heart has a double leak and a flutter." At once you are affected and for days and weeks you seem to be carrying around a great and oppressive load. You are sicker now than you were, because you know that life is in danger.

When we have an examination of our whole nature and find defects we are sadly depressed. But where we find excellencies, great and marvellous, possibilities of achievements surpassing our highest hopes, then we are happy, and the heart cheers us, and we rejoice in our strength.

Life is like the old feudal castle and its people. It is guarded carefully to see that only friends come and go. The happiness is from within, the inner life cheers the inmates. No traitor is there but all are in full sympathy. All may well say:

"Let our home life cheer us for there shall be no such traitor as anger to go out to spread an evil report, but he shall be kept in chains." There shall be no resentment or revenge escaping to tell its "rhodopsin" story of conflict within. But there shall go out and come in only those who shall bring good cheer.

How essential then that the heart should be right with God, controlled by divine impulse and filled with divine wisdom, as the source of the fountain should be pure. Though the face may smile at times, that will not change the conditions of life any more than a new coat will make a beggar a rich man. It is rather the heart that

controls the face and features and hands, and whole man.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life."

God is the only one who can satisfy every condition of life. This means to obey God, to bow to His will, to have life in harmony with His, for the heart, which in this case is the sum total of a man's power, is the engine of life to run the man to ruin or to safety. It is like the fires in the furnaces of the ocean steamship. If they burn within their limits, controlled and used, they are the source of strength which baffles and defies every wind and every storm, and the passengers are cheered. But let the fires once break out and burn the ship, then sorrow and disaster and death will follow. Keep thy heart with all diligence and let it cheer thee on thy journey, defying trouble and sorrow and even death. Yes the heart should be right with God and then it will always supply your nature with good cheer.

Many there are who think that the source of happiness is from without—that all things must flow to themselves before they can be happy. Did you ever know a spring in the mountain to be fresh and sparkling when all streams and rivulets pure and impure flowed into it? Could a spring in that way fulfill its mission? Did you ever know any person to become happy and good by grasping all within his reach, and by getting all he wanted, giving nothing to others? No, no,

the secret of purity and happiness of life is in its flow, like the spring sending forth its stream, sparkling, dancing, laughing, liquid clear, because it was purified in the heart of the mountain.

"Let thy heart with its liquid flow, cheer thee, O mountain," says God, "and then thy verdure shall break forth into new life." So the fountain of perpetual youth is in the heart, though its source is in God. Its flow is that of goodness and righteousness and honesty and Godlikeness. "Let thy heart cheer thee," for therein lies the secret of happiness.

III. To walk in the light of thine eyes, is the third great secret of happiness.

Learning to walk! Yes but you have forgotten how that went; how you misjudged distance, and reaching for a chair you came short of it and fell with painful result. Your mother came to your rescue, and as she gathered you up said,

"Look my child where you are going. Use your eyes." "Walk in the light of thine eyes." When we stumble and fall it is chiefly because we do not walk in the light of our eyes. God has given to everyone light enough in the outer world, so that no one need stumble. The civil law makes but little allowance for the man who has lived all his life in this country and then breaks the best known and simplest laws. The court answers to such a plea,

"It is your business to know." So God has

given to every man knowledge enough for an upright life, and no man need ever go blundering along in the moral world. God's Word is to enlighten him, the promises are for every condition, the rewards for every good deed, the crown for every conquest. The Church is God's divinely appointed means to enlighten those who do not see. It is a lighthouse to the seaman, a star of hope to the mariner, a beacon light to every traveller. Follow this light, " keep thine eyes straight before thee," " walk in the light of thine eyes " and you will find the great secret of the happiness of youth.

But we should also keep ourselves before our eyes. Those we like least to look upon, are ourselves. Of course the mirror is attractive to some, but only so long as it reflects youth and beauty. In ancient Rome a fair lady who loved her mirror, thought one day that it revealed the signs of age. At once she smashed it into a thousand pieces. She could not look upon herself in the light of her eyes. This act of the noble lady was considered a license by others for the same act and the truthful mirrors fast disappeared. Then in order to save the poor victims it was reported that to break a mirror is bad luck. So now they receive sharp looks instead of sharp blows.

But the look that is here intended, is deeper and keener than any that enters a mirror. It is an X ray photograph one that looks through and through, and sees all.

It is called X ray because X is always, in mathematics, taken to represent the unknown quantity, something the eye can not see. When you go to a photographer to have your picture taken you know about what the picture should be. But who knows what the X ray will reveal. Walk in the light of thine eyes which look through and through and criticise and correct. If we were severe critics of ourselves we would be less severely judged by others.

" Know thyself," cried the philosophers. " Walk in the light of thine eyes," says God. When you go up and down the street watch yourself. When dishonesty sits by you to plan a dark deed watch yourself. When temptation walks by your side, taking your arm to lead you to do the wrong act, keep your eyes on yourself and see how you look; then get your hand on yourself and by all the power you have, bring yourself back again.

Walk in the light of thine eyes, then you will be fit to walk in the light of God.

IV. Judgment is the fourth secret of happiness.

What has judgment to do with happiness—everything. To be under crime is worse than to be under sentence; hence judgment becomes a mercy. The penitent before God is always acquitted, hence his happiness. Now each act is judged singly, and if a man is trying to do right and sins, God is more lenient. He who plans

to do wrong and does it will be treated one way. He who plans to do right and does it will be treated in quite another way.

Some leave all accounts to be settled at last for a final summing up. Others settle their accounts as they go along, by watching their lives, by asking forgiveness and finding it granted. In this case the final judgment will be the summing up of the good that has been brought along with life.

How have we used this life of His, loaned to us for our profit and enjoyment?

Have you walked in the light of your eyes, or have you been cross-eyed to the truth seeing double and not willing to accept either? Have the eyes been closed? Has the heart, the righteous life been made the source of your rejoicing or has the heart poured forth a turbid stream to darken the world?

"Into judgment," that our standing may be established forever, and especially how much we are to Him. Has the fire of the heart consumed the life or has it warmed the whole nature, cheered the life and brought the soul up to God?

"For all of these things God will bring thee into judgment," and may the divine word be to thee,

"Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." This is the divine way to come into the happy, the ageless life.

VIII

THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE

"Christ . . . who was not made after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.—*Hebrews 7: 16*

If you stand upon the Eiffel tower in Paris, one thousand feet above the ground, and look out over the city and country, you will observe that all streets and roads and marks of property ownership have disappeared, while fields, forests and gardens are blended into one continuous landscape. You are too high to be bound by the conditions of life upon the surface of the earth.

So in this text we are lifted high into the atmosphere of eternity, where time and earthly conditions disappear, and where there is one great broad sweep of eternal things.

The Bible itself has no chronology of dates; that has been supplied in the margin by man for his own convenience. The chronology of the Bible is that of events, which sweeps along without waiting to plant milestones or set up land marks as though expecting to return again. And this chapter has reached the highest point of all, for it brings forth Melchisedec, who defies time

and breaks all dates into fragments; for it is said that he was without father or mother or uncles or aunts,—that is he had no recorded history of his descent,—hence he was "without beginning of days or end of time." By this it is not meant that he was not born and did not die, as is the case with others; but it did mean that the record of his life was not kept as usual in those days among the Jews, and that the loss of his earthly history was of small consequence in the presence of the eternal life of the soul whose record was not lost.

Still higher are we carried in this story to the One whom Melchisedec typifies, that is, the Christ who is both sacrifice and example and so stands at the highest point of all life, for He was not made after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

Here then is the great contrast between temporal and eternal life, between temporal and eternal power. The body lives thirty, forty, seventy years; but who can tell the life of the soul? Set a bound to eternity, then you can tell of eternal life. But eternity,—who can measure it? It is a boundless ocean upon which time floats for a little like a bubble, then bursts, and is gone.

It is said that if you could connect all the orbits of all the stars and suns and systems, into one measureless path, then if you could combine all the planets and stars and suns and systems into one great globe, that the swing of this great

body in its measureless orbit would be only as the swing of the pendulum in the life of the soul.

It is said that if a bird of long life were to come from beyond the confines of this earth and take just one grain of dust, then fly away and wait a million years, then come for one more grain of dust and fly away with that, then wait another million years, then come for another grain of dust, and so coming for just one grain once in every million years till all the earth and all the planets and all the stars and all the systems are removed, that then the soul would just be in its infancy and eternity would just be begun.

> "Eternity where? It floats on the air,
> Mid clamour and silence it always is there,
> That question so solemn
> Eternity where?"

Now this is represented in the life of Christ as a power, for He was not made after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. That is, Christ's life was measured with eternity and was found to be greater than eternity. This then is to be the measure of man's existence—the power of an endless life.

Now, power is the commonest thing in the world. You find it in earth, air, sea and sky, and in the heart and hand of man. Mr. Tyndall once said, that if all the power of chemical affinity held in a single drop of water could be properly utilized, that it would run a train of cars as far

as from Edinburg to London, a distance of about four hundred miles. One of the greatest preachers of this age, said some time ago, that if all the power of every Christian could be utilized, the world would be brought to Christ in a single day. If this be true, what a great waste of power and strength there has been in all the ages, for the Gospel of Christ seems in many ways to have little more than a start. It is in developing human agency that the power of an endless life is to be shown.

The reason why steam so long slumbered in the water, is that man's power was not large enough to bring it out.

The reason the world was so long silent and unneighbourly is that man did not for ages grasp the power of electricity, to make it carry his message.

Now, if man finds it so hard to deal with these questions of everyday life, how can he expect to grapple with the great questions of eternity? To answer this great need of man, who is made after the law of a carnal commandment, there has come the Christ of God, who was made after the power of an endless life. He is not only a fulfillment but also a revelation, hence,

I. The power of an endless life, reveals life.

Here is a person, the Christ, who outmeasures all questions of time and eternity, and our lives are to take on a suitable measure of that power.

It is a most gracious revelation in the midst of life's mysterious existence; for we came into the world in the mystery of life, we walk in the mystery of being, we go out in the mystery of death. We put our feet in the tracks of old Nicodemus and push along, if need be in the night, that we may come to Him who knows all the mysteries of eternity, and ask,

"How can these things be?" And we never go away disappointed, if we hear Him through, for He has the revelation of the endless life.

Like the centurion we disregard our standing and endanger our position by which we gain our living—and position has ever been considered of prime importance,—that we may help the needy. This is a new phase of human action and has its issue far beyond this mortal life.

It was a new revelation in the life of Paul that led him to throw away earth's brightest prospects, for something that seemed to all men shadowy and uncertain, and which led away from the great Sanhedrim and the pinnacle of fame, to suffering and death. The reason is that he had had a view of this larger and fuller life, and counted it better than all earth's treasures. The reason why we are discouraged is because we see life only in sections, and most of us are near sighted at that. But when we can see life in relation to eternity, how different! If we who are Christians could see the whole plan of our lives with the glorious ending, we would never have a mo-

ment of doubt or discouragement. If the soldiers of Washington's army had seen the result of the War of Revolution from the beginning,—if they could have looked down one hundred years and could have seen the glories of war and of peace of our own day, then Bunker Hill and Valley Forge and Yorktown would not have filled their hearts with solicitude. Why could Isaiah go on with so much assurance? Open his own word, uncover with him the future and you will see that he had linked his life with Him who was not made after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. You never would have heard of Isaiah, and of Daniel, and of ten thousand others but for this. You will never cease to hear of them because of the power of the endless life.

We were about twenty-five minutes in the St. Gothard's tunnel in the Alps. During that time no ray of light came from the sun though he was shining in all his strength. It is one of the longest and darkest tunnels in the world, yet by the lights in the train we saw some of the brightest faces and heard some of the jolliest laughs that were ever seen or heard. This was not because of the darkness of the tunnel, but because of the bright sun that we knew was shining on the outer world, and because the most beautiful flowers and the most delightful perfumes would soon greet us, and the coolest zephyrs would blow and the highest mountains would lift their heads

far toward the sky as though to say, "We must be near our God." It was a revelation to me of the way the darkness of this earth may be made light by the power of an endless life.

That which widened the circle of Paul's life beyond Palestine threw it out also beyond the horizon of man's vision and gave him sights which were unutterable and full of glory.

That which makes you open your account book for to-morrow, also commands you to open your Bible for the future; the one that you may see how your accounts stand for this world, the other that you may see how they stand for eternity. Man lives mostly in the future; the beast lives altogether in the present. You do not tell your horse or your dog or your canary bird anything about to-morrow or next week or next year, because they can not understand. But God talks to us mostly about the future. If you take the future tenses out of the Bible it will be no longer the word of God for you will have taken the best part of it away; for the Bible would have you to live largely in the presence of prophecy and promise and hope. It is the power of an endless life coming out and taking hold of us as with invisible hands and drawing us into larger life with God.

There is somewhere a story which tells how the knowledge of eternal life began to dawn upon the earth, and how the power of the future first took hold of man. A great colony of the de-

scendants of Cain, the first murderer, had gathered in their happy life, for the knowledge of death had not yet come to them. Cain knew well what death was, but he kept the burning secret to himself. One day a hurled stone struck down a son of Lamech. They thought he was asleep, so they brought to him his childish toys to wake him from his slumber. But no stillness like that had ever come to any one of them. As they stood in wonder, Cain came forward and whispered,

"He is dead," and told the awestruck family of death and future life.

A new feeling from that moment came over the house of Cain. All things assumed new meaning. Even the sunshine had a different look to them.

"It seemed that light was never loved before,
Now each man said, 'Twill go and come no more';
No budding branch, no pebble from the brook,
No form, no shadow, but new meaning took,
From the one thought that life will have an end."

How beautiful! Yet how much more beautiful the Christ who was made after the power of eternal life, and through whom we never die.

"I will show you all the glory of Greece," said an ancient to his friend. Then he took him to Solon the Spartan lawgiver.

"Is this all?" asked the other.

"Yes, this is all, for when you have seen Solon you have seen all the glory of Greece."

So I will show you all the glory of your immortality by pointing you to Him who was not born according to the law of a carnal commandment but after the power of an endless life.

"Thou O Christ art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find."

II. The power of an endless life explains life.

It was long a mystery how suffering could help suffering and how sorrow could be borne away by one in sorrow, and how the crucified Nazarene could inspire a despondent world with hope and joy.

There are men foolish enough to laugh at this, and to say that it can not be done. They may be laughing now, though we can not hear them, for small sounds do not easily disturb the air of this sacred place. And if we should hear them we would not need to fear until their laugh shakes the earth more than did the events of that tragic day on Calvary.

How can they explain that this little Book, the Bible, which a child may easily carry in his hand, can be the basis of all lasting learning and literature; how it will lead men out of suffering and sin and will set a going powers that will never die, and which will sweep across the world with mightier force than storm of wind and hail.

Now we understand that it is life, and not years that makes the difference. An old negro

sixty-three years of age in Baltimore took his boy, ten years of age, to school. After the son had been received, he asked,

"How old must one be to enter school?" They replied that they would take them at any age. Then he said he would enter too. There was something in that man greater than the mere cycles of time, and more eternal than the dates on the calendar. Yes it is the power of an endless life that scorns the marking of years and laughs at the wrinkles of time. The youth of sixty outruns and leaves behind the old man of twenty, and passing him by, scorns his laggard pace. For some are younger at sixty than others are at twenty. It is not cycles of suns but sin that makes man old. It is the Christ of endless life that comes into every needy soul, that shines in every beclouded face, that spreads His wings of hope over the grave of every believer.

Now we know why it is better to keep God's commandments than to break them, because they have their issue in the endless life. Now we can understand why King Canute could not lash back the sea. It is because these things which are beyond his control are in the hand of that One who never slumbers or sleeps. Now we see why Pilate could not release or condemn Christ at will. It was because he was only a factor and not supreme in the events which had their issue in eternal life. Now we can understand why the sun and moon stood still till Joshua

finished his battle. It was because the events of that day were closely connected with eternal things, which were more important than the mere going of the earth in its course. Now we can understand why Daniel was not devoured by the lions, and why Joseph was not killed by Potiphar. It was because they were only actors in a great plan which God was working out for all.

Now we know why the scar in the hand will never rub out and can never wear out. The flesh will never give up its mark, though all the particles about it may change entirely, two, three, or four times. There is a something that keeps it there, and that something must have to do with immortality. The soul has been wounded and can not give up the mark. Sin scars the heart as the knife scars the hand.

Now we understand, too, why God bears with us so long while we may remain in sin. It is so that we may come to Him in righteousness and have the eternal reward; for He says in verse twenty-five of this chapter,

"Wherefore He is able also to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us." He ever liveth, therefore He will ever plead our cause.

"That is a worthless tree," says God, "cut it down why cumbereth it the ground?"

"No," says Christ, "let it remain this year also and I will tend it carefully, and if it will not bear fruit with the best of care then cut it down."

Even God has not the patience to endure fruitlessness so long, but Christ is willing and able to wait, for that is His mission, for He was not made after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

III. The power of an endless life, rewards life.

It is man's nature to believe that there will be a reward for every venture. The Hellenic story told of the Elysian fields; the people shivering in the Arctic cold look forward to their Walhalla; the Indian to his happy Hunting ground; the Jew, to his Paradise; and the Christian to his Heaven. Every cause has its effect, every sequence its consequence, every promise its reward. But every one knows that all rewards are not given now. Where is the man who at once gets his full reward for business honesty, on account of which his competitor has taken great advantage. Men laugh at him for passing by the chance to make a fortune quickly through dishonesty. He gets his reward, not in this life, for he has waited long for it, but rather in some land where accounts are balanced with perfect accuracy, by an accountant who never errs.

Where in this life will the poor mothers get their rewards,—those whose lives are one constant sacrifice—almost a burnt offering—for the boy who spends his own life as well as hers, as though life were a thing only to be

wasted as quickly as possible, and who never says, "thank you," to her for anything? Nowhere here do they get their reward, for they die in poverty and suffering for their boys. There must be a reward for them somewhere. If there is no other argument in authority of Holy Writ, or in human mind for a heaven, this is enough. The power of the endless life bridges over the places of suffering and sorrow to the shining portal in the hill of God.

God does not pay us off as we go, and it is well that He does not, else He would be done with us. To be sure He does pay off many, that is, those who, though they defy His law and His will and His word, love the best of all that is to be had on earth. Of this class Christ said long ago.

"Verily I say unto you, they *have* their reward."

But for most of us God holds back the great reward, as a father holds back the estate until his son is of age, and knows how to use it well to his own good. Whoever gives a cup of cold water in the name of Christ shall not lose his reward. He does not say when the reward will come, in this world or the next, but it will come, for it is promised by Him who was not born after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

Our life lies mostly in the future, where rewards are sure, and it is in the future that God

will fully reward us according to the deeds done in the body.

It is the old story of Eden renewed, that every tree shall bear fruit after its kind. The grape-vine need not go to the book of botany to learn that it will bear grapes; it just goes on according to its nature and brings its own fruit.

The fig tree does not ask the wind or air or sun if it may bear figs. It must bear them, and the future harvest of the figs is as sure as the growth and life of the tree. Every tree shall, (it has no choice, it must out of its very nature) bear fruit after its kind. And this is only an example of eternal things, when every life and every action shall produce its own harvest, both for to-morrow, for next week and for eternity. No one shall live and not see this law fulfilled. Thus we may judge of the reward that shall come to us. We may have again the blessings of Eden, and see the fulfillment of God's promise more gloriously than ever Paul or John saw them fulfilled, for the revelation is of this life and the next, and is made by Him who was born, not according to the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

"One law for now and the future,
One light on the distant and near,
The bliss of the boundless hereafter
Pulses in the brief moment here.

"Life dawns on us, wakes us by glimpses,
In heaven there is opened a door,
The light flashes out through earth's vistas
The dead are the living once more.

"To illumine the scroll of creation,
One swift, sudden vision sufficed,
Every riddle in life, worth the reading
Has found its interpreter, Christ."

IX

THE PEACE OF GOD

"The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."—*Philippians 4: 7.*

How could Paul the homeless, hunted, persecuted old warrior of the New Testament offer peace to anyone? How dare he to use the word peace forty-two times in his writings while all the rest of the writers of the New Testament only used the word forty-seven times, five times more than he?

Where did he, the seemingly troubled one, find peace? Did he find it in the Old Testament, where the word occurs about one hundred and seventy-five times? No, for if he had he would have possessed peace before he had the vision on the way to Damascus.

Did he learn it from Peter or any of the other disciples? No, for he was too independent for that. He must have it in an authority which will perfectly satisfy. And this he could find only in the *nature of God.*

I. THE PEACE OF GOD.

This is different from any other peace, as God is different from any other being. And peace,

in its final analysis is harmony with God, whose nature is sufficient to satisfy every one. The only way that Spain could have peace, a few years ago, was to come into harmony with the will of the United States, even though she had to be driven to it. She tried to find peace by way of her army and navy, and in the politics of Europe, at the capitals of the various nations, and in her own statesmanship. But in these she failed, and had to learn that the price of peace was surrender to the great nation which she opposed.

To know that the one who is Almighty is our friend, to know that He is the one whom we have wronged and offended, and that He has forgiven us, and will protect us at every turn, to know that "all things work together for good to them that love God and to them that are called according to His purpose," to know that out of every wrong shall come right, and out of every sorrow shall come joy, and out of every loss shall come gain, and out of every defeat shall come victory to the Christian,—this is the peace of God, for only His great nature can compass all of these.

The only true peace that the little child can find is with its mother where there is boundless love to cover all its little needs.

The fish finds peace and comfort, not upon the shore away from the water of the sea, nor yet near the shore where the waves lash and dash, nor yet at the surface of the sea where the waves are constant, but far down in the depths of the ocean,

away from agitation and disturbance, there the fish finds peace.

So when we know the great generous nature of God deep and abiding like the fathomless sea, we do not find the disturbances of life, but rather Him in whom all may find rest, for His nature gives us the deep and abiding peace.

"For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me."

He who sails the ocean without regard to the laws of winds, and tides, and storms and stars; and he who goes through this world without regard to the nature and name of God will not only fail, but will meet the storms that will last until he turns to the haven of rest in God.

In the Old Testament God stood forth as encompassing all things and said,

"I am that I am."

More awful to the Jews than any or all other things was the name and nature of God, so that when they read of Him in His own word they passed over His great name Jehovah, in silent awe.

So all nature rests in Him. There is the fathomless sea filled with untold riches bearing health to all, carrying gently those who would go from land to land, and ever sounding the perfect rhythm of the ages; and all this is sustained by that One in whose nature we securely rest.

There is the landscape covered with fruits and

flowers and waving grain, and whose horizon ever flees before you as you travel from place to place, while riches are strewn over mountains and valleys, and all these rest in the hand of the Almighty.

There is the boundless expanse of space filled with system upon system of worlds like a shining stairway to the everlasting home of the blessed. And God sustains all these by His own unerring will. High above all things God sits sublimer than the mountains, grander than kings, nobler than all earthly lords, truer than parents, more loving than lovers; and everywhere and over all He is supreme. To rest in His presence—that is peace—the peace of His infinite nature.

"How great a Being, Lord is Thine
That doth all beings keep,
Thy knowledge is the only line
To sound so vast a deep.

"Thou art a sea without a shore,
A sun without a sphere,
Thy time is now and evermore
Thy place is everywhere.

"Who should not fear Thy searching eyes
Witness to all that's true,
Dark hell and deep hypocrisy
Lie plain before Thy view.

"Motions and thoughts before they grow
Thy knowledge doth espy,
What unborn ages yet to be,
Is done before thine eye."

II. This peace passeth all understanding.

Paul's definition of the peace of God is in perfect keeping with God's nature, for he confesses that it can not be defined. It "passeth all understanding." No mortal was so well prepared as was Paul to describe this peace. Had he not rested in it again and again, from his great trials and persecutions? Had he not seen heavenly visions surpassing any except perhaps those of John? Yet he says it can not be understood much less defined.

The peace of God passeth all understanding because it is linked with God's redemption of man. Who can understand why "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life?"

How can the little child understand the great act of his mother who saves him from the flames, though she herself is burned? Then who can understand the infinitely greater act of Christ in coming to a sinful world and dying to bring peace and joy to the human heart. No wonder Paul says it passeth understanding.

That Christ should stoop to save any one seems strange, but that He should select some old hardened, profane, leprous sinner, whom all men despise and shun, and then say that He will save all such, who will believe, for He says He will "Save to the uttermost all who will come to God by Him," seems doubly strange.

It is as though a king were to find the most squalid hovel in his realm, one that had in it, malaria, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, yellow fever, diphtheria, small pox and consumption, and had never been purified, and take that as his dwelling place. Then, it is as though his very presence, his heroic sacrifice, for though he dies, he lives again, puts disease to flight, and he bears in himself the power of all of these, yet not their guilt and pollution; till malaria sneaks away into the swamps, and typhoid fever crawls out with its slow, sluggish step, and scarlet fever runs with its red flag, and small pox takes away even its foot prints from the face until all are gone. Can you understand this? No, you will sooner test the value of the famous painting, the Angelus, by weight upon the scales, or buy St. Peter's Cathedral at Rome, by the cubic foot, or count the drops of water in the sea, or tell off the sunbeams by the yard. No, we can not now understand the full meaning of the peace of God.

After the surrender of the Spanish army at Santiago, General Toral sent messengers to the soldiers in the smaller towns to tell them that they were included in the surrender, and that they were to be sent home to Spain, by the enemy, the United States. But the soldiers would not believe until they sent to see if the good news was really true. It passed their understanding, and no wonder, for such a thing had never happened in all the history of the world.

Yes, Paul was right, for we can not understand the peace of God, yet we may enjoy its power, as we may enjoy the Angelus, St. Peter's, the flashing sunbeams, and ten thousand other things which we may not fully understand, and which come as great gifts from God. The peace of God which passeth all understanding is through the great gift of His Son.

"Peace, peace. sweet peace,
Wonderful gift from above,
O wonderful, wonderful peace
Sweet peace, the gift of God's love."

III. Shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

It is the picture of a military guard, with picket line all around and the strength and power of an army to protect.

When the Spanish army at Santiago surrendered to the United States forces, the latter at once became the guards of the former. Those who were enemies a little while before, were then in perfect safety because kept by the power to whom they had surrendered. Now the American soldier, who a while ago might have been killed by the Spaniard, will give his life, if need be, for that very enemy, and the Cubans who tried to kill and rob the soldiers of Spain were driven away by the sentinels of the United States army who were keeping the army of Spain in perfect

peace. Let any one attack those who have surrendered to the American army, and the whole power of the nation may be had as a protection.

So while we are enemies to God, He is against us, and we have fear and agitation and war. We are troubled and tried and defeated to show us that we need the eternal guard to keep our hearts and minds.

But when we come and give to Him our hearts and lives, then He keeps us from dangers and defeats and even from the wearing power of fear. All the forces of heaven, and all the power of the Almighty, that may be necessary, will come to our help and will keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Why is it, that there are no walls around New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and all other cities of the land? It is because peace stands guard and no enemy shall dare to pass that divinely appointed sentinel. Why was it that the heaviest walls, one beyond another of Peking, the greatest walled city in the world, were no match for the allied forces a little while ago? It was because this peace of God was not there. Not only were their hearts and minds not guarded, but their homes and lives found no safety until they surrendered to their enemy who proved to be their best friend. So the best protection of earth can not compare with this one great power which we receive when we are obedient to Him who gives

us the peace which passeth all understanding and which shall keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

While sitting on the deck of an Atlantic steamer, far out at sea, we suddenly saw the sea grow calm within a circle of swirling water. All outside, was clash and lash of wave. Three times did the great ship go round and round, like some huge beast grinding at the mill. Then some one said,

"See there, the ship is describing a circle, what does that mean?" Then another said,

"It must be that one pair of engines is disabled and the ship is beyond control." So all was confusion for a time, and still the ship went round and round. Then one came from the captain and said with cheerful voice,

"They are only proving the compass." So instead of anything being wrong as we feared, all things were being proved right.

So, God in His infinite might seems to be a great mystery to us. We become confused and think that all is going to ruin. But when we look again we see that all within the charmed circle is growing calm and we hear the voice from our great Captain saying that all is well.

There is just one measure of your security at sea, and that is not the bolts and masts and bars of the ship, but it is the captain's face. I have several times in a heavy sea and in the storm gone out, holding tightly to the ship, lest I might be

swept away, and watched the captain's face. The ship seemed entirely in the hands of the giant ocean. We would be lifted high toward the sky and then as by a mighty force we were hurled down, as though to strike the jagged rocks beneath. But there stood the captain at his post unmoved. Then the sea would come running from either side as though with one mighty effort to dash the ship in pieces, strike with terrific force, and for a moment it would quiver as though about to go to fragments, then shoot down like mad. Surely now the captain will be frightened. But his great browned face never changed its confident setting of a single feature. It was evident that he was master of the sea and of his ship. And the peace of that captain put our hearts and minds to rest and I said, "There is no danger while that captain is so calm."

In all the ways of life there is just one measure of security, and that is our Father's face. We may be cast about till we seem to have no place on which to stand. We may be sent down until we stand at the lowest point, at the open grave; disease may come fast and furious, yet so long as the heavenly Father's face is calm there is no danger. Go look in His face in the times of distress and trial and all will grow calm, for the peace of God which passeth all understanding will keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Peter was one of the first to look into that calm face after Christ's resurrection, and the old joy

and confidence which he had lost through the denial came to him to abide forever.

Man knows well the flow of the tides and the flight of the winds, yet how little does he know of his spiritual storms or calms. Still God knows and in this supreme knowledge and power man may rest. From the human side the trouble belt in the world is not very wide. The atmosphere where are storm and calm, is only about twelve miles high. The water at Niagara Falls is only about twenty-five feet deep where all is foam and roar and danger. But down where the ocean is one thousand feet deep there is rest and peace. So one can easily go beyond the trouble line, as the fish can easily go below the seething surface of the water, the worm can easily go below the frost line, the eagle can fly beyond the driving storm and bathe his feathers in the shining sun.

Thus we may run to the covert from the storm and find in the presence of the great God who controls all things, that peace of God which keeps the heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

Here is an old godly mother who has had heavy cares and numerous trials from childhood, who has lost money, friends and loved ones, until you think she must be full of blinding sorrow. If you listen by the door of the humble home you will hear her say,

"'Thy will be done.' I'll lean the harder on His strong arm; for He has said, 'I will keep

him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on Thee.' "

And she shuts out the trouble as she enters into His presence, and puts the whole world to rest as she finds the peace of God. Who would not be a child again to learn this great lesson from such a life? Who would not willingly rest again from the cares and trials of hard pressing life, and say,

" Backward turn backward
O time in thy flight,
Make me a child again
Just for to-night.

" Mother come back
From the echoless shore,
Take me again
To your heart as of yore.

" Over my slumber
Thy loving watch keep,
Rock me to sleep
Mother, rock me to sleep."

Dear mother, who in a restless sorrowing world reminds us of the peace of childhood, thou dost also teach us of the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and which shall keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, and which we find when we are,

" Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast,
There by His love o'ershaded
Sweetly my soul shall rest."

X

WHAT ALL SHOULD DO ABOUT THE GOSPEL

"Nfcodemus . . . . came to Jesus by night and said unto Him, Rabbi we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him."—*St. John 3: 2.*

WHILE seated in an elevated train in our city some time ago, I saw a penny on the floor between two gentlemen, both of whom spied the piece of money at the same instant. Each motioned the other to take it, and each refused. Again there was from each to the other the command with hand, and eye, and head, to take the money. Then one took it up and handed it to the other and the other refused it. Then said the new possessor of the coin,

"What shall I do with it?"

"What is generally done with money?" asked the other.

It was evident that neither of the men wanted to be so small as to be sold for a cent. If it had been $500, or $5,000, or $50,000, what a dispute there would have been as to who saw the money first, and as to who was the owner, for either would have taken the risk of some trouble for that amount.

So we pass quickly by that which we regard as worthless, and will not touch it. But that which we value highly receives our life homage.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the embodiment of the life of its Author, seems to us almost worthless, as did the penny to the two men in the car. And by what we do about it, all will know how highly we value its preciousness.

I. To give the Gospel proper attention is the first great duty of all in regard to the Gospel.

Very few seem to do that in these days. Old Nicodemus came to Christ and said,

"We know that Thou art a teacher sent from God." "We know."

"We do not know," is often the cry of today. Few of us have definite religious knowledge and fewer definite religious convictions. We can not be sure. And yet we have a better reason for knowing now than had Nicodemus.

It is very strange that we know the least about the most important things of life. You stop 1,000 men in the street and ask them where they are going and 999 will tell you exactly where they will soon arrive, street number and all. But you stop 1,000 and ask them what about the journey of life that goes beyond street and number in any earthly city, and a large number of them will not know, they have not mapped out life's journey that far ahead. It is easy to plan for a short

journey. You can do that without any trouble, but you need help for a long one, and here is where the Gospel aids you. It is the guide book, the sailing chart; and Christ Himself is the Guide and the Captain.

Attention to the Gospel is what is needed, for it brings to us in the form of "we know" what is the absolute certainty, the value and the blessedness of life. O how we should seek the best in life, O how we should know life's value in the Gospel. An old farmer who stuttered a great deal, went to his town in a western State to telephone to a friend a couple of hundred miles away. The friend noticed that the farmer did not stutter as he had been accustomed to do, and when the conversation was finished he said,

"You seem to talk better since you went out there. You don't stutter like you used to." The other answered without repeating a single letter and as clear as a bell,

"No, a man can not afford to stutter through a telephone when talk costs him fifty cents a minute."

So the man who knows the importance of life and the responsibilities of living, will not let the impediments of his lower nature bother him in the least. Blessed is the man whose long distance talk to his God is better than his talk to his fellow men. It is by means of this helpful Gospel of Christ and the Christ of the Gospel that we are able to have this swiftness and certainty of life

toward the future so that we shall say with Nicodemus, "We know that Thou art come from God,—we know."

Why do we know? Because we have learned it. We have put our attention upon these things until they have become our possession.

So we need to put our attention upon this greatest of all sources of knowledge. We need to find out about the Gospel, to know its power, to feel its force, to live its greatness.

Why there are plenty of people who know nothing about Astronomy though they have heard the names of the greatest astronomers. There are a great many who know nothing about Mathematics, and yet they have heard the name of Euclid. There are thousands who know nothing of electricity, though they hear of Morse and Edison and Tesla, nearly every day. Their trouble is they have not given these subjects time and attention.

Great fortunes have been the wonder of this age. Men who started in life without a penny fairly rule this country. If you ask them how it came they will tell you that they did it by putting their whole time and attention on a plan that would work. They put themselves into it and they knew they would then succeed, they could not help it.

These are colossal lessons to the Gospel seeker. It is folly for you to think that you are going to get good out of the Gospel of Christ without giv-

ing it time and money and attention. Do you expect to absorb a good life and a character like God's? Have a care then, for the human pores are tightly closed to the coming in of anything. You might rather expect that the money in the banks will come out and chase after you, as you race along the street, and roll up into your pockets for your use, than that you are going to gain a character that is godlike, and which will give you peace here and eternal life there, without attention and application and study. Paul said, "I beat myself under the eyes, that I may not be a castaway." I plead with you to put your attention upon this Gospel of Christ and it will pay you better than any millionaire has ever been paid in dollars for his ceaseless labour.

If this Gospel deserved the attention of Nicodemus and of our fathers and mothers it surely must have our changeless devotion.

Then this Gospel never disappoints. No man comes seriously and honestly to it without being richly paid. You spend years at learning a business by which you are to earn your daily bread. You go through the hardest training to become educated in body and mind. You spend years of time and the closest attention for the achievement of one victory in politics, in literature or in business. Why then should you begrudge any time to religion which promises you all that you may ever hope to receive in the next world.

Beside all this a man may fail as a banker. He

may fail as a mechanic, he may fail as an orator, though he may work very hard, and be as diligent as is possible. But no man ever gives his time and attention and heart life to the Gospel of Christ without his reward. All that Christ asks is your attention.

Some years ago in England two men said they would prove the life of Christ a failure and the Gospel a myth. In order to do this they decided to attack two of the great facts in the history of Christianity. One took the resurrection of Christ and the other the conversion of Paul. They studied all history sacred and profane and to the astonishment of the world, and to the delight of all Christians, they produced not two volumes against Christianity, but two of the strongest testimonies in its favour the world has ever seen. All the Gospel asked was their serious, honest attention and when they saw they believed.

A few years ago two friends were talking, when one asked the other if he still believed in infidelity. The other said he did and then added that he believed a beautiful story could be written about the Jesus of Nazareth. The other said he believed he would write such a book. So he went to Palestine and studied the life of Christ there, and instead of writing a book against Christ and Christianity as was at first intended he wrote one of the greatest books Christianity has ever numbered among her triumphs. All that the Christ of the Gospel asked of any of these men

was time and attention. Ingersoll only ridicuied the Gospel of Christ. He did not study it. He was only a profane joker in holy things. Gen. Lew Wallace gave his attention and the Gospel did what it always will do, it won his heart, and he then wrote the great book, Ben Hur.

The Gospel comes with an honest demand that you give it your attention, and then you will have the certainty of eternal life, and may say with Nicodemus, " We know."

II. To set a great value upon the Gospel is the second duty of everyone in regard to the great message.

Nicodemus was like the thousands of our day who, like the men in the street car, want the penny but do not wish to be seen picking it up. He came at night because he did not wish at once to be identified with the cause of the Nazarene. He did not know the value of the good news offered him. His way of thinking was the best, he believed. He placed his " We know " over against the " I am " of the divine message. For the time this message of Christ was to him only as the penny which lay at his feet, not worth his attention.

The reason why we do not become Christians sooner is because we undervalue the Gospel. We consider it something to be taken, like medicine when we are sick and about to die. It is too often regarded as was the penny in the car, which

can not do us much good at best if taken, and hence is not much loss to us if we do not have it.

We do as little as possible for the great cause which is divine, counting it next to worthless and then when trouble and calamity and death come we wonder why it is that religion is of no use. It is the man who picks up the pennies that has the fortune at the end of life. It is the man who learns of this wonderful Gospel down deep in his mind and soul that has the religion that pays. Men come to the end of life and think it strange that they do not feel religious when they are about to die. They think that religion ought to take hold of them, whereas they ought long ago to have taken hold of religion. The things that are prominent at the end of life are the things that have had power all along the way. The man in the car did not see much use in the one penny, but he would if he had had it multiplied by a million. You do not see the value of the Christian life, but you will if you come honestly and see the blessings of life multiplied by infinity.

Nicodemus perhaps thought he would belittle himself by coming out actively for Christ. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, a religious and a civil ruler among his people. How could he come down to this low level of the Gospel?

However Christ soon showed him that his wealth and greatness, when compared to that of Christ was in the ratio of nothing to infinity of

value, and that proportion remains the same to-day. The man who thinks that he belittles himself or compromises himself by becoming a Christian has not yet begun to understand values. He has not yet adopted the standard, the smallest unit of which is beyond the multiplied arithmetical and geometrical progressions of his own enumeration.

Christ was so much greater than Nicodemus here in this interview, that Nicodemus seemed like a twittering sparrow or a chirping cricket in the presence of a Mozart or a Mendelssohn. Did it belittle Nicodemus to come to Christ? No, for this and one other act, that of his helping in the tender service of the burial of Jesus, were the only immortal deeds he ever did. All else vanished from the page of history long ago, but this, which he considered a small act, and which was done at night, will remain the mark of his earthly immortality and will blaze forever in the bright light of the eternal day.

It is not then a small thing to become a Christian. It is the greatest act of life. It is that which immortalizes you and makes you an orator of good forever, like Abel of old, who "being dead yet speaketh." It gives your good deeds to history to be seen and read of all men, like the woman who anointed Jesus with the ointment, so she was linked forever with the Gospel, for it is said that: "Wheresoever this Gospel is

preached, this also that she has done shall be told as a memorial of her."

To become immortal you must unite with that person—the Christ—and that power—the Gospel —which will live forever and ever.

O that you might know the value of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Moses considered it of more value than all the treasures in Egypt. Paul gave up everything, even his *life* for the Gospel's sake. O wondrous power that moves and sways the world and swings it on toward the very gate of heaven. Is this a small power? Look at its representative, Christ. We look and we say like the poor demoniac of Gadara, "What have we to do with this Jesus, the son of David." We come like keen old Nicodemus and ask, how can these things be? We do not know in whose presence we are. We do not know that this is *the King.*

It is said that the present German Emperor one day took a long walk at Potsdam. He had gone further than usual and at dusk he was dusty and weary and still some distance from the palace. A country woman, one of his subjects, driving a cart overtook him. He spoke to her politely and asked if he might take a seat in her cart. She looked for a moment at the dusty and travel stained king and then whipping up her horse, she said:

"Not I, I don't like the looks of you." Some distance down the road a mounted patrol stopped

the woman and asked her what the Kaiser said to her.

"The Kaiser," she said, "was that the Kaiser?" Then as the truth dawned upon her she gave one glance at the king as he was approaching, whipped up her horse and was soon out of sight. She did not know her king. So with Nicodemus, so with you and me, we do not know Him, we do not know that He is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

> "Behold a stranger at the door
> He gently knocks, has knocked before
> Has waited long is waiting still,
> You treat no other friend so ill."

It will make you great to ride and abide with the King. Let us then come not timidly like Nicodemus as though the Gospel is only a worthless thing, but let us come boldly to our King and to the everlasting treasures of His kingdom.

III. To accept the Christ of revelation, is the third great duty of all in regard to the Gospel.

Nicodemus said,

"No man can do these miracles which Thou doest except God be with him." It was then a divine claim. This claim has never been disproved or set aside, so the obligation rests upon everyone to accept Christ. He does things differently from the way they are done by anyone else. Why should it be thought strange then that

we should not understand everything about Christianity. If we understood all, the Gospel would not go beyond the human ken, and would not be greater than a great human production. From its very nature there must be things in the Gospel which we can not yet understand. And when Nicodemus asked,

"How can these things be," he was giving his testimony that no man can do the things that Christ did except God be with him.

Why did Nicodemus want to understand all? Why do we want to know the how of everything, for that is impossible?

Suppose the boy of five years should go to his father who had invented a wonderful machine, such as a printing press, and say,

"I will not believe in this machine or work with it until I can understand how it is made and how it is operated." "But," says the father, "you can't understand it. I might waste all my time explaining and yet you could not understand."

"Well," says the boy, "I will never have anything to do with it unless I can perfectly understand."

"But," says the father, "you will learn as you go on."

"No," says the boy. "I must know now."

That boy is just like the man who says,

"I will not accept Christ and Christianity until I can understand all."

How foolish! How can the child understand, how can you understand except by learning?

Yes Christianity, the Gospel demands your attention, your faith, even though you can not understand.

We can not understand the *how* of anything very well, that is nearly always mysterious. You can not understand the growth of the lily. Christ threw this out as a challenge at the beginning of his ministry, when he said,

" Behold the lilies of the field, how they grow."

But no one has yet understood or explained their growth. Then why should the *how* of the change of our hearts and lives be thought strange? The fact that it is so is sufficient as Nicodemus expressed it when he said,

" No one can do (not how they do) these miracles unless God be with him." You are different from what you were 10, 20, 30 years ago. You do not know how it is but you understand the difference. So when God tells us that in His Son we are to have changed hearts and different lives, as different as though we were to be born into a new world, we know it is true, because no one can do these things except the God of power. Trust your life to the Christ of the Gospel, it will pay though men may say you will fail.

A youth one day was climbing the Alps; far up the cliffs he had gone till the sun had set and the night was upon him. Kind hearted villagers warned him of his danger but he would not stay.

Higher and still higher he climbed. The gray dawn of the next day revealed his lifeless body in the snow, and in his hand the banner of his hope.

> "There in the twilight cold and gray
> Lifeless but beautiful he lay,
> And from the sky serene and far
> A voice fell like a falling star.
> Excelsior!"

Why did the poet Longfellow immortalize this youth who perished foolishly? If he had reached the top of the mountain in spite of the snow and cold and storm, or if he had arrived there sooner than any one else and so had broken the record, as they say in this age of fast and furious contest, then we might have expected poetry to commemorate his heroism. But he never reached the top, and his climbing was a failure, but his life was not. He trusted himself to a great and lofty cause and in that he never failed.

The great poems of the world are about men who trusted themselves to a great cause and seemed to lose. There is that one of Wordsworth about Toussaint L'Ouverture. Toussaint was a black slave of San Domingo, one of the West Indies. In 1794 the French government freed all the slaves on this island and Toussaint soon became the governor. In 1802 Napoleon sent an army to reduce them again to slavery. Though he did not succeed, he did take Toussaint to

France and confined him in a mountain fortress where he soon died, as Napoleon expected he would. But in the poem of Wordsworth he will always live, while liberty has life. He gave himself to the Gospel of Liberty and so he conquered.

He who gives his life attention to the Gospel of Christ shall live forever in name and fame, even in the face of apparent failure as did Toussaint L'Ouverture, and as did Nicodemus.

XI

LIFE'S VENTURE

"Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught."—*St. Luke 5: 4.*

WHAT did this Carpenter know about fishing? What could He say that would help these men, who knew from childhood every foot of the shore and every fathom of the water of the Sea of Galilee? What could He tell them about fishing in the day, the unusual time, when they with their best experience had toiled all night, the proper time for fishing, and had caught nothing? Did He wish to mock their failure? No, He did not. Then something strange was about to happen. In the shadow of the coming events, the disciples stood bewildered. There had been a strange fascination about His teaching that day. He swayed the multitudes as the winds sway the forests. He held their attention as the sun holds the sunflower, which from dawn to dark keeps its face toward the king of day. It was evident that Christ had come to have His way; and fisherman and Pharisee alike were to bow before Him. Peter was the spokesman, as usual in after experiences, and his words are worth a moment's notice. He spoke briefly and to the point. Christ

had told them to cast their net on the other side of the boat, which they were slow to do. But Peter agreed on these conditions.

"Master we have toiled all night, and caught nothing. What use is there then in any further effort? Nevertheless at Thy word, (if Thou wilt be responsible), we will let down the net." So they,

I. Launch out into the deep.

It was a great picture of Himself. He had first of all come from heaven into the depths of this sinful world. In the face of these facts the wildest storms could bear no comparison and present no danger. He had already met and vanquished the worst forces of temptation and disease. He had met the devil in several encounters and was conqueror. He had met sin, the great dark enemy of all, and it too had suffered defeat at His hand.

No one had yet launched out so far as He into the deep dark mysteries of life; and when He comes to us with the command to launch out, we are to know that this is the world wide cry of progress, in all lines and in all the ages; for no man who is narrow and limited, and an inshore fisherman will go far in any branch of business or Christian life to-day.

It was Mr. Cyrus Field, with an idea as broad as the ocean, a faith as deep as the sea, and a

perseverance which no storm or failure could kill, who kept on and on until the Atlantic Cable was laid and man could speak with man under the sea. This was literally launching out into the deep, and defying all things for the sake of success.

They say that a submarine telephone system has just been invented and that the man who completed this great work toiled nine years to embody his hope and faith in the completed work. What a venture that was! Nine years in the dark, without telling the world about it! Nine years in the balance between success and failure, between hope and despair! Nine years of time and money spent; that is surely launching out into the deep.

Here in New York, several years ago, I was invited by two gentlemen to go into a little room, which was closely locked and guarded. That room contained a secret on which these men were spending much time and labour. Day after day and year after year they put their time, their money, and their best thought, into that machine. It seemed to me a hopeless undertaking. It did not seem possible that it would pay for any of the time they had given to it and the money it had cost them. And yet that has become one of the greatest inventions of the age. They were launching out into the deep; and imitating, in a small way, the Christ in His venture on the Sea

of Galilee, and the example of Columbus, when he set sail from the old world with the Pinta, Nina, and Santa Maria.

Why, this is an age of ventures. It is not much use to start in any branch of business these days, unless one has a round million of dollars or more. It takes a great deep ocean, to float the stock of the great trusts and corporations. The sea of Galilee, about twelve miles long by six wide, is no match for these financial seas that flow round and round the world, shutting in the little islands on which man dwells.

Since now this advance movement in business is so widespread, and since there are so many great ventures in obedience to man's opening opportunities, why should it be thought strange that Christ came to earth and used this simple event on the Sea of Galilee as an example of what we may do, as well as a proof of that which He has already done? If it is believed that Columbus made his voyage to discover a continent, why should it be thought strange that Christ came from heaven to save men. Humanly speaking it was more impossible for Columbus to make his voyage, than for Christ to make His, into this sinful world. The one cry of all things is, "Launch out into the deep."

Why then should the Church be the last to hear this command? Why should the world have more faith in its efforts than the Church has in its Leader?

Here is a plot of ground, cleared away in our city and workmen are busy with plan and material. Workmen go here and there with all confidence. What does it mean?

"They are building a Church," you say. But look again after a few days have passed, and you will see that it is not a Church, but a great business block; and soon the name of the firm will be placed in front, and business will be carried on there with all the confidence of success.

Here, a little further over, is another plot of ground. There are also plan, material, and workmen. But the work goes slowly and stops altogether by times. The venture is carefully guarded. And what building is this? it is not a business block, but if you will wait for a year or two it will be far enough along for you to see that it is a Church! Is it true then that men have less faith in Church and in religion than in business? Perhaps not; but certainly people are not usually so explicit and definite, and are not in so much of a hurry about religion as they are about business. This in the text is an incident, which has to do with business, and yet it was altogether at the command of Christ. It is the lesson that the world needs to learn. We are all too slow with our religious experience, and too careless about God's part in the business schemes and transactions of the daily life. If we could learn, that God controls the circumstances of every business venture, as well as the fish of the

sea, we would not only be more reverent, but also more successful.

Men make ten ventures in business to where they make one in religion, and then only about three in ten make any kind of a venture in religion at all. But you ask,

"Is not the business man surer of success?" On the other hand, those who have carefully studied the subject say that there are about ten failures in business to one in religion. And this is as it might be expected, for in religion a man has the Almighty, who guided the disciples on the Sea of Galilee, while a man in business, without the divine help, has only his will, his energy, and his brain to depend upon. Not that business and religion are to be separated, but rather that they are to unite in proper relation, that they may act in harmony, the centrifugal and the centripetal forces, which are to keep all in poise before God.

Let not therefore the tired and over worked Peters, when commanded to go forward, rise and say,

"It is no use; we have toiled and lost." There is success for everyone in temporal and in spiritual life, if we only find the right way.

It is well that this incident happened as it did, or Christ would have lost one of His best opportunities, and the disciples would have missed one of the best lessons. As it was they got the fish,

the lesson, and the Saviour. If they had been successful in catching the fish that night, they would have missed one of the greatest moments of their lives. Is it not so that God comes to us often in our misfortunes and disappointments, and makes them the happiest and best times of our lives?

This all happened in a most unexpected way. They were out in the deep where they did not usually fish, they were all tired and discouraged, and everything seemed wrong. So Christ went to a great deal of trouble, to teach them that He can control all circumstances and conditions of life in spite of anything.

So in this seething, boiling, almost frenzied business life of to-day, is where the Church is to do her best work. The question for every Christian is,

"Am I launching out into the work as the Master has commanded?" We wonder if there will be any to rise and rock the boat, so as to well nigh pitch all into the sea, or will all go forward, eagerly and with confidence?

The secret of all is with our Captain. He is with us as He was with the disciples. Old Clement of Alexandria, out of a rich experience said of Him,

"Fisher of men the blest,
Out of the world's unrest,
Out of sin's troubled sea,
Take us Lord to Thee.

Out of the waves of strife,
With the bait of a blissful life
Drawing the net to shore,
With choisest fish good store."

This is the song of every follower of Christ who obeys His voice and launches out into the deep.

II. Let down the nets for a draught.

This experience of the disciples was no mere excursion. It was no pleasure trip as a relief from the strain of teaching of the day before. It was no mere fancy picture of the "Painted ship upon the painted ocean." It was a most definite statement of the nearness of divine life, and what the blessings of our life may be if we will take His way. Christ is always promising something definite. Life in all forms is dear to Him and is assigned to its place. All forces will produce their results. The acorn can produce only its kind, the beech nut only the beech tree.

The first thing then that God does, is to answer the cry of the soul. If a man is a fisherman God does not expect him to be a lawyer, and if he is a farmer, He does not expect him to be changed at once to a mechanic. Christ's mission in the world is to supply man's need. The thought in the disciples' minds was that they had caught nothing and that they needed fish. And how quickly He answers that need, even before the disciples asked Him.

The world's supply as well as the soul's supply

is in keeping close to Christ, for He is supreme over all life. He longs to answer the prayer of every life, but can not unless He has the right to control all. It must be remembered that the disciples were obedient to Him at this time. There were plenty of other ships there, and none of them seem to have been successful. All they received was from the disciples who had more than they could manage. Then He turned the lesson and gave them the great object of His own great life, and made the disciples helpers, when He said, "Ye shall catch men." This was to be the object of their lives, an abiding interest in their fellow men. A man grows great according to the object toward which he constantly works, and true greatness is Godlikeness, for we increase in importance as we approach toward Him.

George Williams, in a warehouse in England, was but little known for a long time. There was not much in the moving of boxes and keeping of accounts to give him fame. But he was working in another way. He gathered in a little company of men and talked to them of the needs of the kingdom of Christ, and what might be done for the human soul. So, little companies of men were organized far and wide over the world, until the Young Men's Christian Association became a great force in the conversion of the world, and the object of George Williams was then known; for he had launched out into the deep and let down his net for a draught.

Carey was a poor man and his family needed every cent he could make at his business, that of cobbling shoes. But his thoughts did not stop with that simple duty, for while at work he had time to study and pray for the great cause of missions, until he became one of the great forces in the reformation of the world. Working toward this high and noble object he became truly a fisher of men.

There has just closed a wonderful career on the other side of the sea, that of Queen Victoria. It was a life which had in it the strength of the oak, and the sweetness and beauty of the rose. For over two-thirds of a century she stood the test of the "White light which falls upon a throne." Her life has brought more blessings to the wide world, than that of any other human sovereign, in all history. If she could have had her way, not a soldier would ever have been killed in war through these sixty-four years, not an island would have suffered oppression, not a colony would have been treated unjustly, not one South African home would have been despoiled, and not one Boer life would have been sacrificed. Such lives come only once in a long time in this strange world. What is the cause of this fame, this power, this purity, this nobility? Go back in English history to 1837, and look at that coronation scene. Listen to that prayer of the young queen to the Almighty, that she might rule according to His will. Listen to that vow to be

first of all faithful to her God, then to herself, and to the people, and you will have the secret of her greatness. That was the bud, this the unfolding through the years of this flower of goodness whose fragrance was to fill the whole earth. A fisher of men was she in the great broad sea of public life in a world of storm and tempest. All honour to that great and noble life.

But God does not look alone to kings and queens for the reformation of the world. He takes the fishermen from the boat as He took His disciples. He takes a Moses from the obscurity of a desert, and makes him greater than a Pharaoh in Egypt. He takes a Paul from among the persecutors, and makes him greater than Nero upon his throne. He takes John Knox from among the galley slaves, and makes him greater than the most fascinating queen of earth. He takes Martin Luther, the humble monk, and makes him greater than the Pope at Rome. And all this because they went out with him to be fishers of men.

So in the presence of Christ we stand, and at His command we humbly cast the net, and in the draught we shall draw multitudes to Him, for we are fishers of men.

III. Enclosed a multitude of fishes.

How quickly this story reaches its climax. It requires several hundred pages in one of our modern novels to tell its secret. But here a world

wide and everlasting truth is told in a little over fifty words. This all shows Christ's divinity. No one else has ever done such a thing. Their nets and their boats were filled to their utmost, and they realized that one who was more than human was guiding the events of that day.

So Christ stands supreme amid the mysteries of life, and gives wealth of character and power of soul. The disciples could not understand the events of that morning until Christ had made all things plain. But they had one excellent quality, that which is indispensable to revelation, that is obedience to the divine command. So there are thousands of mysteries all around us; every day we have to go on in the dark, expecting the revelation to come to us as it is promised. The great word of everyone who will find the revelation of God's mysteries is,

"Nevertheless at Thy word we will let down the net."

The prospect may be very small, the human impossibility may be to us very plain, and yet we are to go on at His word. It is He that has said,

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed ye shall say to this mountain, "Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea and it shall be done." It does not say, If ye have faith as a full grown mustard tree, but as the seed, which begins its life under the ground and out of sight, hidden away from the sun and air. It does not say,

"I must have sun and light and air before I

will begin to grow, therefore take away the ground, take away the ground; if you do not I will not grow." If it were to say and demand that, and have it granted, the light and heat would be too much for its tender life. And yet that is what too many demand. They say that unless they can understand all they will not believe. That is like the boy who says he will not go to school until he can understand all that he is to learn; or like the grain of mustard seed that will not grow unless it is a tree before it starts. It was the simple act of faith on the part of the disciples that gave them the abundance of fishes, such as they wanted. It is the simple act of trustfulness in our daily toil that gives us the blessing which can come in no other way. It is the same trustfulness that we see in the sparrows which do not sow or reap or garner the harvest, and yet always have plenty because the Heavenly Father feedeth them.

Christ stands now as then, supreme in the world of life. He is more than the mere Carpenter, He is the world wide Providence to give to a perishing world what is needed. He rose above the rules and laws of fishing on the sea of Galilee, for He disregarded the conventional methods, and thereby showed that He was Master of every phase and form of life. He who made the worlds with the spoken word, calling material into being, no one knows how; He who could make another set of worlds as easily, and have plenty of ma-

terial over, can He not provide in the daily life for our few wants and can He not assure us of the eternal reward? Why should man ever go hungry for bread or for opportunities, or for knowledge or for power, when this same divine One walks the shore of every sea, and asks every fisherman if he has caught any thing, and if he would catch an abundance? Why will not the world learn the lesson that it is the Christian's duty to feed the hungry instead of being a beggar? And why will Christians not learn that all abundance which is to remain as a blessing is to be found in the Providence of God? As soon as man learns this he will, like the disciples "enclose a multitude of fishes."

XII

THE CHRIST POWER

"Whether this man be a sinner or no I know not, but one thing I know that whereas I was blind now I see."—*St. John 9: 25.*

If one accustomed only to the homely hut of the pioneer, were to be taken into the most beautiful earthly palace, then suddenly to see with uncovered eyes the surpassing splendour of that place, he would have some conception of the strange experience of this man who was born blind and suddenly made to see.

This is a strange world even when it opens to us line by line, page by page, and volume by volume, from childhood onward. But for a man to grow to maturity of life and to fulness of strength with eyes covered, and then suddenly to have flashed before him in the white light of the noonday sun and the clearness of perfect vision all things beautiful, was an experience that the angels might envy. In the sudden blaze of glory this man saw but one object clearly and that was the Christ who gave him sight. In the palace of the king the guest sees not the glory of the palace, so much as the commanding presence of the king who has invited him. The hand which

has made the palace is greater than the palace. So Christ was to this man the most wondrous sight.

The grass which springs from the ground in night time can only guess at the glory of the sun until the king of day be revealed. The traveller, entering Yellowstone Park in the twilight, can only see in outline the unsurpassed wonderland that the day will spread out in all its beauty.

The blind man had been guessing for perhaps twenty years, but now he stood in the full blaze of the noonday light of the Sun of righteousness. Three things he saw very clearly, first that,

I. The Christ power defends.

No one is so defenseless as a blind man. In a thousand ways he may suffer for need of sight. The best weapon to give him is vision. No one in the moral world is so helpless as the man who is without the truth of Christ. The best power that can be given him is a clear conception of right, the unchangeable truth of God. Four times the Pharisees attacked this man and four times they went down before the power of Christ in him. He was the moat about the castle, the portcullis tightly closed, the Chinese Wall around the invincible city of truth. "Whether this man be a sinner or no I know not, but one thing I know, that whereas I was blind now I see."

Every man in the world will be tested. And the only power that can give him successful de-

fense against all attacks is the power of truth. With this, ignorant men will be able to stand firm in the face of the severest trials. With this the disciples moved the world with a mighty hand, to the surprise of the Christian centuries. With this Luther and Knox were able to push the old world along new graves, cut by the hand of Providence. It was this same power of God's truth that led Luther to say,

"I would go to Worms [the city where he was to be tried] if there are as many devils there as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses." It was this power that compelled the haughty Queen of Scots to say of John Knox,

"I fear him more than I fear ten thousand of the best soldiers."

A king once sent an officer to arrest a seer who had publicly reproved him. But when the officer came into the presence of the prophet, he was so impressed with his goodness, that he forgot his commission from the king and came over to the prophet's side. A second command of soldiers was sent with the same result. The king now very angry, started himself from his palace, rushed out like a maddened beast to find this seer. But when he came into the presence of the man of God, he too, was conquered and became a suppliant at the feet of the prophet.

There is no power that can stand against the truth of God, planted in human character and working out into life. Around every one thus

filled with the power of God's truth, there is a protection against the enemy, as there was a line around Mt. Sinai when God was giving the law to Moses; and the command given at that time has gone down the ages, that whosoever shall touch the mountain,—the character where God dwells—shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart. God is angry with every one who assails His truth as found in the human soul. Man will fail before it, as the Pharisees failed before this ignorant man whom Christ healed of blindness.

Now this power of Christ in the human soul does not ask if it may work. It receives its authority and command from God. It carries stores of energy and volumes of manhood.

The sun does not struggle to bring the grass from the ground. The sun does not call out:

"O grass, O trees, come, come and grow in this way!" But the king of day sends forth his power and warms the earth to make growth a necessity. So God surcharges us with His might and we can not but show forth His life.

Moses went up to the mountain with form and feature as dull as any Israelite. The same Moses came down God-endowed. his face shining with the divine glory, because he represented God.

It is this that makes the world believe in you, for this is what keeps all things in proper poise amid all the changes in the moral world. It is like the apostle Peter whose shadow, as he passed by, was sufficient to heal the sick.

Like Christ on His way to raise the dead, heals one by the way who only touched the hem of His garment, so the greatest work we do in the long run of time and eternity, is not so much by the busy hand as by the weight of moral character.

A Shaftesbury leaving Parliament goes out at midnight to gather the waifs and strays from under Waterloo bridge, because the Saviour went about doing good, and he had learned the habit. And when they carried his body to its last resting place, the whole city mourned; and those who had been saved by him raised their banners bearing the inscription,

"I was hungry and naked and he fed and clothed me."

A Gladstone rising up from the councils of the nations where he defended the word of man, became the mightiest defender of the Word of God. So the great defense of the world to-day is the power of righteous life working in the lives of men as this power of Christ worked in the man that was born blind.

II. The Christ power gives security.

This is the law of the spiritual gravity by which we are held securely and yet freely to the place to which we have been assigned by Providence. If this blind man's gain had been but momentary it would hardly have paid to give up home and friend and church. But his gain was eternal. He might lose all earthly things, but this one

thing would never pass away. Never could the Pharisees take away this vision of Christ. He had gone far beyond them. The water that rushes down the falls of Niagara can not turn and climb up again that steep cliff. It is pushed on and on out into the lake and further into the sea. The rock that has gone roaring and tearing down the mountain side can never return again to its lofty home, but must stay down there; for a great force holds the rock in its relentless grasp.

This man had taken a new position in the world and he had taken it to stay. Others might change but he could not. He had passed the falls of his life, and could never go back again. "One thing I know."

There has in like manner come into your life an experience which convinces you forever of your relation to your God. Some revelation has come, some strange event has happened, some blessing has been granted; and you know beyond a doubt that God has helped you. It may have been that you were sinking beneath the waves of this surging sea of adversity, and a strong hand has taken hold of you, almost crushing you, and yet lifting you out of danger and into safety. That one thing has brought absolute confidence in the affairs of God, and will remain forever as a fact. Life is not like a slate on which we write events only to be erased at pleasure. As well might you say that a Euclid does not keep in his mind the principles of mathe-

matics. As well might you say that a Sir Isaac Newton can erase from his mind the knowledge of the heavenly bodies, and destroy the measuring line which goes out and out into space.

"One thing I know," said the man who now had experience. He did not have a college education, he was not a learned man, he did not need to know a large section of the Bible before he had certainty in life that he was right. He went not by knowledge, but by creed, and his creed—his belief—was of the power that God had given him. The creed of the man who is in a wreck at sea is that he can swim, and he knows it. It is not a power that he uses always, but he has it and can use it at any moment. It is not the power that he can use only on board the ship, nor does he need to hold to the ship when he is to save himself. It is the power of independent victory.

Our creed like that of the blind man, is not how we see, but *that* we see, having a power which no one can take away. When one is pushed away from all his moorings as was this man, and made to go alone or sink, he soon finds how much he knows, and if he can endure. This man stood upon a foundation which could not be cut away. "One thing I know."

Going along Fifty-ninth street at Broadway a few days ago, I saw that the northeast corner of the foundation of the statue of Columbus, had been removed. There was a great gaping hole,

and spanning it was a heavy iron truss which formed in part, the new foundation for the statue, and at the same time the roof of the underground railroad which they are now building. It seemed typical of the practical principle here in this country, that business will anywhere, and at any time, cut away the foundation from under sentiment, and even religion. Columbus would be a lucky man if he could stand in life at Fifty-ninth street and Broadway, and then travel the country with its quick changes and be able to say,

"This one thing I know, that the principles of truth and right, of God and the conscience, shall stand forever." The man is a fortunate man who has his "One thing I know," so engraved upon his soul that no one can erase it. Man needs unchangeable faith in a few things,—in one thing—that is the never failing presence and power of God.

There is one law in the world which never changes, which never varies under the same circumstances, and which man never doubts, and that is the law of gravity. In vain man has tried to go beyond its reach. He has tried the balloon only to suffer disastrous results. He has tried mountain climbing, only to find that if his foot slip on the mountain side, gravity hurries and hustles him to the bottom, teaching him to say—

"One thing I know," and that is, "whereas I was up, now I am down, and the law of gravity is secure."

The man who tries to go beyond the power of God will as surely suffer.

" One thing I know," says the man as he stands still amid the changing scenes of earth.

The child sees for the first time the light house far out in the surging sea. He watches for a while and then asks: " Papa is that light-house safe."

" O yes," answers the father, " it will stand secure."

The child watches for a while, and then exclaims, " There, there papa, I see it move."

The father smiles and says, " No, no, it only seems to move, because the water all around is constantly changing. If there is one thing I know, it is that that light-house is built right. It is bolted and morticed and cemented. The most certain thing in all the world is that it will stand."

There are those who, like the child, watch the restless surging events around the Christian life and say, " There, there, see it is a failure." Then one stands forth as did the blind man and says: " The most certain thing in all the world is my security in God. It is the one thing I know and know well. Whatever may be the belief of others this one thing I know, that I am secure upon the Eternal Rock of Ages."

" How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word;
What more can He say than to you He hath said?
You who unto Jesus for refuge hath fled."

III. The Christ power gives us sight.

"Now I can see." It was not an incident, it was a condition; not a flash of light upon his eye and then darkness, but rather a power of seeing, in which there were endless possibilities of pleasure.

Conversion, the coming into the possession of a great new relation with God, and into new power, is not an event of a moment, but rather a permanent condition before God. A change has come. Eyes have been opened.

It is a new world, yet we are in the same world. It is a new life, yet we are in the same life. It is an added power of God.

"The fool hath said in his heart, 'there is no God.'" And to him it is as though there were none, for he does not see any. He goes groping about saying.

"There is no God, I know there is no God, for I do not see any."

We say of this man, "Poor fool," if he only would see God he would no longer be a fool; sound is not known by deafness, light is not known by blindness, wisdom is not known by folly and God is not known by ignorance.

The melody of the song is only half in the singer's voice, and the other half in the listener's soul. To open the life of the soul to the harmony of God, and the blessings of His constant presence, is the mission of Christ. This is the restoring of sight to the soul. This is the mission

also of all combinations of providence. It took a long time to bring this man to the proper place, so long that those who came to Christ laid it to some sin of his parents, or of himself.

" Master who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? "

There are still in the world those foolish people who think that God is a great avenger, who stands somewhere above, with a scourge, watching for a chance to strike every one who turns one hair's breadth from the right. They think everything that does not suit them, and does not agree with their plans is because God hates them. Those who think this forget the mission and words of Christ.

" Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the glory of God might be revealed, and this glory is Christ's helpfulness, for He said: " All power is given unto Me, both in heaven and on earth," therefore go and teach all nations, and help them to the Christ life.

Of course suffering comes from sin, but not all that happens is punishment from God. A misfortune comes in the family. An affliction which medical skill can not remove. Blindness, lameness, care of an aged parent, the cutting off of bright possibilities for the future; these press upon you and you say,

" What have I done that God should punish me." Why, my friend, God is not punishing you, He will not do that if He can help it. God loves

you too much for that. The farmer sees the gathering clouds in the west, they grow blacker and thicker, they lower and lower, the thunder roars and the lightning flashes, and on comes the storm. He looks upon it, and then leaving the plow says: "There, that storm is coming because I plowed that furrow crooked." So we miss it in the spiritual life. Of course we suffer for sin, but God does not go round imposing special punishments. He rather uses the circumstances for our good and His glory. By these things He drives us in upon ourselves, and we learn that the greatest lesson next to knowing God, is to know ourselves. For if we know ourselves we must know God, and if we know God we will know ourselves.

The boy goes out and in his play is run over by the cars, and has his leg broken. When he is taken home does his mother stand by the door with a whip to scourge him? No, never, even though he may be to blame. He has punishment enough in the suffering. Then the mother places him comfortably in the chair after the limb has been set and brings books to him, and says,

"Now Harry you will have time to do some reading."

She sits by him, talks to him, tells him stories and recites to him the world's history. Through the affliction he learns of his mother's goodness and of himself.

Blind Milton was thus driven in upon his own

life, to study the secrets of his own soul, and hence produced the Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained. So afflictions drive us in upon ourselves, and we see the beauty and grandeur of the human soul, and the glory of God is revealed. We look above the mist for the glory of the sun, so we look above all earthly trials for the heavenly vision.

A traveller returning to England from Africa was told that he was nearing home, for the peaks of Teneriffe had come in view. The passengers were all exclaiming:

"There, there they are."

But he said.

"I do not see anything."

They said, "Look again." He looked, but still did not see, when one glanced at his face and exclaimed:

"You are looking too low. You must look above the clouds if you would see the mountains."

We, like the blind man of the text, like the traveller from Africa, must look above the distractions and trials of earth if we would see the eternal glory of God.

XIII

THE CROSS BEARER

"And He bearing His cross, went forth to be crucified."—*St. John 19: 17.*

From childhood we have been familiar with the picture of Atlas bearing the world upon his shoulders. Even to this fable the human mind has responded because there is everywhere the need of a saving and sustaining power. The full realization of this longing is found, not in fable, but in the reality of this incident when Christ went forth bearing the cross, for the sinning, suffering world. It is a sublime spectacle, that of the Almighty, in His Son, stooping under and bearing aloft the lowest symbol of deepest shame.

I. Bearing His cross.

That was the decree of the Roman law, that He should bear His own cross, as with every one condemned to be crucified. The difference came in the fact that the Cross of Christ was not heavy alone in the weight of wood that composed it, but also in its deep and abiding meaning. What made the cross heavy was that the very persons for whom He was bearing this heavy weight did not know Him, and did not under-

stand that He was bearing it for them. One of the saddest things in all human life is to come to the world with a great and noble purpose which has cost you your very life, and offer it freely, and have the very people to whom you bring the blessing, sneer and reject what would be to their everlasting good.

You remember the story of Rip Van Winkle, who went to his native town after his twenty years of sleep, and how no one knew him. He talked to the old friends, to his son and daughter, and yet they did not know him. How his old heart grieved under this load of sorrow.

You remember how Joseph in Egypt went through slavery and prison for the sake of his father's family, and how, when he stood before his brothers to save them from famine and death they would not believe that he was Joseph, and that he meant well. Nor would his father believe until special proof had been furnished. O how Joseph longed to make himself known to these doubting brothers, and when they did believe, what a flood of tears washed away their grief.

So with those who were urging Christ on to the place of crucifixion, they did not know Him. They did not know His mission, and He felt He had to be patient with them.

The question comes to us to-day, "How truly do we know Christ in the scenes of our daily life?" How much are we forcing Him to bear, of all the weight of woe and care that fills the

world. There was not at that time one hand to relieve the weight of the cross. All forsook Him and fled, and He stumbled on until He fell under the load, and Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry it for Him.

We look into the churches these Sabbath mornings and see that the singing is mostly done in a careless, heartless way, men and women coming in many instances, out of curiosity, as did the great throng which followed Christ when He went to be crucified, and we are constrained to say, He is still bearing His own cross. We look in upon the Sabbath evening gatherings of our churches and see the pews vacant, in too many cases, and must say, surely Christ is bearing His own cross without any help, right in the midst of those whom He is helping. We look at the daily life of professing Christians and see the indifference to the eternal truth by which God manages the world, and we say again, surely He is bearing the cross alone to-day, as on that memorable day eighteen hundred years ago. See! there He goes alone! Even those, His disciples, have forsaken Him. Why should He not fall under His burden? Look at this picture. Look long and intently until you see yourself if you are there in that throng that is forsaking Him and letting Him bear His own Cross; look until you see that nothing short of a heroic Christian life will do; look until you are willing to rush forward and take

hold of this great cross of the world to help relieve that One who deserves never to bear it.

Do you not know that it is the Christ who suffers because there is so little done for Him and because we know so little of His mission? To do and do for a boy in the family; to get him out of trouble again and again; to feed and clothe him; to follow him when he goes into evil places, though he knows not that the father is near, and to protect him from various dangers at great cost, while all the time he spurns the parental care,—is that not hard for a father? Do you think that this is not a heavy cross? And yet what father is there who will not bear all this and even more if only that boy may be at last saved? Now you know why so many men in middle life and old age, are stooped and broken in spirit. They are bearing the crosses of their sons and daughters. Now you know why Sabbath school teachers and ministers of the gospel look so careworn. It is not so much hard work as the heavy weight of care as they try to bear the burdens of their people.

There was once a beautiful girl, it is said, who was brought from her pure country home, and subjected to a life of shame in this great city. Her mother spent all her life, all her time and nearly all her money hunting for her. When the mother would come near to where she was the girl would hurry on to some other place. At last in

despair she went to a detective and told her story. He said to her, "I will find your daughter." He told her to have her picture taken and have a large number printed for him to use. He took these photographs and wrote on them beneath the sad face the two words, "Come Home." Then he placed them upon the wall of every resort where he thought the girl would go. Soon she came into one of these places, and looking upon the face of her mother was filled with remorse. That sad face said to her, "Do you suffer? I suffer more for you. I bear the heavy cross, come home." Then she found her way to her mother's home and to her mother's never changing love.

Here we see in faint outline the picture of Him who has borne the cross far over the world, who bears it to-day for us, and whose face may be seen everywhere and who says though He may be sinking under the weight of sorrow,—"Come Home."

II. Went forth.

In all the old pictures of Atlas with the world upon his shoulders, he has been standing still. Here we have it said that Christ bearing His cross went forth. What else could he do? He was bound and led by the soldiers, the power of the Roman Empire was over Him, the Jews were against Him, His own disciples had forsaken Him, and urged on by the mob He must go forward.

But look again and you will see that He went forth in a little different way from that which was usual. Of the other two who were crucified, it is said they were led forth to be crucified; but of Christ, He went forth. He went of His own free will. He could have resisted them and they must have fled. He could have spoken and they must have vanished. He could have blown them from His presence as by a single breath; but He did not. It is evident then that He had some great object which reached far beyond the moment and far beyond a life of negative ease. Before Him duty rose like the great line of hills which He was to climb, but in the climbing He should have joy and happiness. Far beyond the line of duty lay the place of victory, though hard to reach yet worth attaining. Hence He went forth bearing His cross.

If we were born perfect in every way, we would not need the discipline of cross bearing. But we are quite imperfect. We must come to the nobler and better life by the rough road which stretches out toward some Calvary. To grow strong of hand or of limb there must be the exercise of those parts till the very discipline becomes our excellence. And when a man would have his faith strengthened he must have a training with God as his leader and teacher.

There are children who suffer and suffer when they are small. Sharp pains shoot through the arms, limbs and whole body. A physician is called

and he says that there is no danger for these are only growing pains. Life is advancing so rapidly and expanding so fast that it becomes in a sense cross bearing. So there is this growing and expanding in the Christian life which we often think is hard and against which we cry out in pain. It is to aid us in this that the Son of God has come, bearing His cross first as a sacrifice and then as the eternal presence, almighty in power. The more we know of Him the greater He becomes to us and the more helpful.

Your mother was never so great as since she went to her heavenly home. You never heard her voice so really as now. You never before so enjoyed the evening songs of childhood which are sweeter than the songs of the angels. There, you can see her now, early in the morning or late in the evening bearing the cross of the family, yet joyous and happy. You are just now learning to know her. She is growing dearer all the time, and it gives you faith and hope. So when we see Christ going forth in the midst of all these trying scenes, never faltering, never turning back, we take courage and go on. Who is there that will now stop at a hard thing? Who is there that will cry out against the human cross bearing which makes us more like Christ? Who will not say,

> "Jesus I may cross have taken
> All to leave and follow Thee,
> Naked, poor, despised forsaken,
> Thou from hence my all shalt be!"

For "He went forth bearing His cross."

III. To be crucified.

Was there no help for this man who had never sinned? Must He be crucified? Yes He must. Old Atlas, according to the fable, continues forever to hold the world upon his shoulders, or all will go to ruin. "To be crucified," was Christ's way of sustaining the spiritual world.

Man's natural impulse is to avoid suffering. If a certain course is likely to bring anxiety and worry, we will take the other road. If there be rocks beneath the waves, we place there a buoy and it is well that we do, for unnecessary suffering is opposed to reason and revelation. But there is One who goes forth in the worst suffering known to man with a firm intention to bear all that is to be borne. This had to be done by someone, for the Old Testament and weak frail human nature are both written full of the need of a sacrifice. There was a justice to be satisfied, and more than this, passing life had to be saved. Where there is a rent in a garment it must be mended, where there is a gorge in the mountain it must be bridged, where there is a chasm between people, as between the North and the South in 1861, it must be filled if need be by the lives of men. He who went forth to be crucified saw in His own great act the rescue of the millions from evil conditions and the power of sin. Their danger was to Him very plain. The course of life thus represented to Him, was greater than the mere preservation of His own physical life from suffering and sorrow.

There is the fireman who sees the child in the burning building and without consulting his own comfort and knowing that he may suffer the terrible agonies of death by fire, rushes forward to save the one in danger. It is the sacrifice, the giving up of one's self to take the place of another. That is the meaning of this great act of Christ.

For a mother who loves her child intensely it is far harder to see her child suffer than to bear the pain herself, and there is not a true mother anywhere who would not if she could, take the affliction from the child and bear it herself. Now this is the case with Christ who goes forth to be crucified in your place and mine if we accept Him as our vicarious sacrifice. As soon as man sinned in Eden, God began to work for his recovery. At once a Saviour was promised and through the ages, until His coming, every breath of heaven has brought to man the same great news. For a time God was willing that animals in sacrifice should typify the sacrifice of His Son.

He had to come not only as a sacrifice, but also to sanctify righteous suffering, for the world, in the simplest things of daily life, is redeemed by pain. We suffer for one another, we bear the pang of disappointment because another is successful, we buy our food with our daily toil, we secure a Christian character at the cost of constant watchfulness. When Ananias was told to go to Saul (Paul) to give him sight, after he

had had the vision on the way to Damascus, God said to him,

"Show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." And yet this suffering of Paul became to him a pleasure, for he received so great a reward. God always pays well for all that is done for Him.

If we could fully understand the meaning of this great act of Christ there would be in every heart such a purpose as actuated Paul when he said,

"Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel," and such as filled the heart of Whitefield when he regarded the saving of souls as the supreme act of human life, and of Savonarola who was willing to give his own life for a great cause which needed defense, and of Moody whose life was one long plea before God, for the redemption of the world.

Who can look upon Christ as he goes forth to be crucified without saying, "He is going to that awful death for me?"

This must make life's trials easier to bear. As Christ went forth to be crucified for us, so every act of man is in some sense a help to others. All things are so bound together, and all the world is so sensitive that somewhere and somehow every act must have its effect. A boy aided with a few spare dollars finds his way into the ministry, and becomes a great power for righteousness; and the small investment has brought to the world a blessing of untold value. An act of kindness or

a word of good cheer, was to the discouraged the turning point and has brought a rich blessing to humanity. And Christ went forth to be crucified that these streams of righteousness might be made to flow out into the sinful world. You and I pass by Calvary with only the knowledge of the suffering of Christ because "He bore our sins and carried our sorrows, in His body on the tree."

> "Can this be He who want to stray,
> A pilgrim on the world's highway,
> Oppressed by power and mocked by pride
> The Nazarene, the crucified?"

Yes, this is He, for "He went forth to be crucified."

Then Christ went forth to be crucified, so as to establish an eternal cause. Not only did He die for the individual but also for the great cause which is to win the world to Himself. The cross of Christ has become the banner of the great marching host of God. Paul said,

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

In any warfare the banner must not suffer. Men will risk anything for the symbol of victory. In a battle in the war of rebellion, in this country, a standard bearer was shot and the banner was falling to the ground when a comrade sprang forward, caught up the colours, rushed on to the

front, in the fiercest firing of the enemy, and saved the day, because the soldiers followed after him to victory.

So the great Captain and standard bearer of our salvation pressed on to Calvary with the standard which is to rule the world and bring all to the throne of God, for Christ went forth bearing His cross, to be crucified.

XIV

GOD'S REVELATION OF GOOD AND THREE WAYS OF GAINING IT

"He hath showed thee O man what is good."—*Micah 6: 8.*

THEN goodness is not manufactured, made by hand, put up in packages and sold as an article of commerce. It does not come from the human workshop, nor is it discovered by man haphazard, after long and diligent searching. But it is discovered, uncovered, revealed, by God Himself, for "He hath showed thee O man what is good."

If a man is seeking gold, he wants to know where the gold fields are. If fame is his object, he wishes to know where it may be found. If he is searching for power, he wants to come into connection with the dynamo of the world. If he is seeking good (and all men should seek that), then he must know that its source is in God.

But it has its issue in man, as the curse of Eden is produced and power revealed in verdure and plants and flowers of earth.

These effects are mentioned in the text and are three in number.

"And what doth the Lord require of thee," asks the text, "but to do justly, love mercy and

to walk humbly before thy God." What more does God require of any man? Nothing more. If thou dost fulfill these; thy relation to thy fellow men, thy relation to thyself, thy relation to thy God; thou wilt have the highest good. This is the full round of the Christian life for joy and happiness and triumph.

I. Do JUSTLY.

One would think this very easy in this land where the courts are established, and in almost constant session from the Supreme court down to those of the states and cities and counties and townships; where every store has its scales, and where the yard stick is on every counter and is almost as common an article as the broom which sweeps our floors. Doing justly would seem easy in a land where the ten commandments are written upon every memory and the effects of the keeping or breaking of them make up the sum total of our daily newspaper, from caption to conclusion.

But even here we have to be constantly reminded that for every act of justice or injustice in the courts or in the country, there is a court in session up above, before which this act will come for review; that for every earthly scale that weighs anything, even so small as the widow's mite, there is another scale upon which it must go; for every yard stick there is a line to which all must be compared and by which all must be

corrected; and for every interpretation of the ten commandments there is an eternal and unchangeable standard in the hand of God.

But this refers to more than mere commercial transactions, even to the weighing of evidence of every life. There is only one tribunal that I know of where premature decisions are rendered, where on suspicion a man is judged when there has not been furnished the slightest evidence, and that tribunal is the human heart.

If even the very best people were hanged every time someone misjudges them, saying, "he is guilty of so and so," when he may be as innocent as a child of anything of the kind, the world would be depopulated in an hour. In some of the old world countries the homes of people, and hence their lives are surrounded by high walls so that neither the robber of money or of character can get in. But here in this country our homes are placed right out by the highway and men as they go by can look in, and they *do* look in, but they see poorly and hence they go away and say they saw so and so, when they did not. Many of the spectators did not have their glasses on and hence they do great injustice to the person of whom they speak.

To all such this text thunders "*do justly,*" or do nothing at all.

Unjust judgments lead to unjust actions and hence the world becomes one of strife rather than of peace. Shall the consumptive take delight in

hearing that a neighbour has cancer and has had to go to the hospital for treatment, and shall he go about telling what he has heard? Does it make him any better that the other man is sick? Shall the man with the broken arm be glad when he learns that another man has a broken limb, and shall he write to his friend and say, "My broken arm is now mending fast because Mr. Jones has broken his limb?" No, no, never; and yet there are scenes and incidents like that everywhere in this world of social disease. But the strangest part is that Mr. Consumptive has a relapse when he hears that it was a false report about his neighbour having cancer, and a dover's powder has to be given to the man with the broken arm and an extra hitch to the bandages when he learns that Mr. Jones did not break his limb at all. Some people have as their medicine for their own diseased minds the injustice they do to innocent humanity. The injustices that pass over the tongue are legion when compared with those that pass over the counter.

To all such there rings out of the heavens these words of God,

"Dost thou know O man, what God requires of thee, [requires, demands, *will* have], that thou shalt *do justly.*' God requires that we shall do justly, for He has provided every facility for it even down to the penny weighing machines that stand in our stations, for even in this there is an idea back of the mercenary thought—that is

that they shall settle the disputes that arise along the way. O if men would only do justly by one another, life would break forth with joy everywhere, poverty would flee before the oncoming provision of God, as a disease flees before the cure; personal character would shine forth as the brightness of the sun; Eden would again be established and heaven would be begun on earth.

O man, will you by careful life—by doing justly, help to usher in this blessed time?

II. Love mercy. But we are also to love mercy.

There are violins so perfect, that whenever the bow is drawn across the string, they will sing a perfect song. You cannot make them send out a harsh sound. The harmony of parts, the perfection of the construction, the vibratory power of every part are all perfect. It is the violin's nature so to sing.

This describes what God wishes of every one. To love mercy is to *live* it until you can live nothing else and can tell nothing else. The nature and news of life should be the same, like that of olden days when the bearer of good tidings was considered the author of the same, and the herald of happiness was the guest of royalty. Mercy then must enter into life and fill every part of one's nature, such mercy as would not harm a worm or injure a bird; such mercy as will bear the injustice rather than inflict it upon another, such mercy as we see in the Christ of all

mercy and grace. Mercy is the doing kindly even in spite of justice; satisfying the demands of justice without receiving adequate pay.

The secret of this is sacrifice; giving up, doing for another, bearing and enduring for the sake of the one to be helped.

Yes Mercy rules the world from man down. Begin with ourselves. The best illustration perhaps is in the brain.

Physiological Psychologists tell us that the brain is composed of over 300,000,000 nerve cells. At a dollar apiece they would about pay the Spanish war debt. But I do not know any one who would sell so cheaply. Now the average life of each nerve cell in the brain is about 60 days. Then 5,000,000 die every day, 208,000 every hour and 3,500 every minute to be succeeded by a like number of their race. As the death of these nerve cells is considerably hastened by action and tension, while I speak to you to-night about 300,000 nerve cells die and as many more are born, and over a million deaths were necessary for the production of this sermon. Great sacrifice; and yet my brain does not complain. It gets nothing but a little nourishment and some pleasure by the way. It is its nature to do that, and the mercy of its action rules; and in this sense it loves mercy.

No one can properly appreciate his brain till he knows the sacrifices it makes for him. No one can understand the value of our liberty till he goes through the hardships of the Pilgrim

Fathers landing on the rock-bound coast of New England and living in snow of winter and frost of spring because they loved mercy.

No one can appreciate manhood till he learns what trials his mother endured, what hardships were borne and how the very life of the parents was laid down for the success of the boy. Yes mercy comes to be the world power because it has its highest example in a world Saviour.

When the Southern army surrendered to General Grant in 1865, the natural course would have been to punish them or at least to put them under restraint. But instead of that they were treated as brothers. They were told to keep their horses and wagons, to go home and till their farms. They were also helped to get a start again upon the land which had been overrun by the soldiers during the war. A whole army mercifully treated. Why was that? Whether men know it or not it was the fulfilment of that beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." At once, our nation became famous, and in a number of instances of international questions we have ruled the world, for this is the province of mercy.

During the war of secession as a battle raged hotly a young man ran away from his post. He was arrested and tried and sentenced to be shot for desertion, though he was little more than a boy. His mother soon heard of the danger of her son and hurried to Washington to see Presi-

dent Lincoln. She had heard, which was true, that he never failed to pardon when he had the claims of a case presented. She reached the White House, when one of the most important cabinet meetings was in session and when the nation seemed to hang as by a thread, which might be snapped at any moment.

Before going into the cabinet meeting the President told his secretary as usual not to call him except on one condition. He said, "keep senators or congressmen or any one else waiting, but if any one comes for a pardon for a soldier condemned to be shot, call me."

The mother arrived and word was sent to the President. Mr. Lincoln stopped the business, saying, "gentlemen, this business will have to wait—it is a case of life and death." And the cabinet did wait and the nation waited till Mr. Lincoln went out to see the mother, pardoned her boy and the news in a few moments flew over the wires and the boy was saved.

When the President returned he told the cabinet what he had done and said, "I always think of those words of scripture, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done it unto Me.'" And He who never refused a pardon when it was worthy, ruled the dissevered nation and brought the two parts together in harmony. Yes he loved mercy and hence the whole world loved him.

One day young Wendell Phillips sat in his

office in Boston and heard a strange noise in the street. On looking out he saw a great mob gathering around William Lloyd Garrison, kicking and beating him and dragging him about because he wanted slavery driven from the land. All night long Phillips lay awake and burning with a fever that this man who loved liberty should have been mobbed in the very city where England's tea as well as her tyranny were destroyed. All night there stood before him the slave, all beaten and scarred and hated, and beside him stood in deepest pity that One whose hands and feet had been pierced with the cruel nails on Calvary and the voice of that One whispered to him, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done it unto Me."

Then he rose up in the strength of a renewed manhood. Henceforth he should not seek any longer honour, or power, or fame, but his should be a life of sacrifice for the needy. And there was then born in him the love of mercy, which made him a vastly greater man than earth could produce, without the vision of the Christ, the one who came to bring the highest mercy of God to man.

Had he never looked upon the Christ, he would have lost the brightest vision of his life, his life would have lost its great motive, the world would have lost a hero, and heaven a saint. Look upon Christ. See Him as He is, gentle, beautiful,

merciful. Then you will *love mercy* and be great in the eyes of God.

III. Walk humbly with thy God.

Who would walk otherwise when he knows God?

Who could have walked proudly or haughtily by the side of the great Queen Victoria whose long life so blessed the world.

We walked by the Alps; thousands of feet rose the great giant peaks; the trees of mammoth size up there, looked like tufts of grass, and the brooklets flung themselves forth in silver ribbons, changing to fringe as in spray they fell upon the ground. In the presence of those great hoary, fragrant, everlasting hills we were silent. We felt our littleness and we walked very humbly lest the mountains would learn that we were so small. Can any man walk by the bold jagged cliffs of Sinai where the law was given in thunderings and lightnings and feel proud? We remember that God said, "If so much as a beast touches a mountain he shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart." We walk humbly by the side of Sinai.

Then there is Calvary which no one can approach without fear and trembling, and yet these are only some of the places where God has planted His feet. God is greater than all these mountains for He made them, He made all things. "He is

infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." Yet He walks with us, He leads us by the hand, and we walk humbly with Him, as a little child walks with his father, and we say as one of earth's greatest, Frances Willard, who had long walked with Him—when dying,

"How beautiful it is to be with God."

XV

GOD'S CARE

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father."—*Matthew 10: 29.*

WHO cares for the sparrows? We do not, for we drive them from our houses, and frighten them from our shade trees, and mourn the day when they were brought to our shores. We refuse to own them, calling them English sparrows, saying thereby that their home and their rights are beyond the sea. In England they are sorry for the time when the little creatures came from the Orient; and in the far East, their rightful home, they represent one of the smallest possible business bargains, indeed the purchase of one is only half a business transaction, for it required two of them to equal in value, the smallest coin of the day, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?"

God alone cares for the sparrow, it seems. So the little creature brings the much needed, but little heeded lesson of God's care of His people.

I. God's care for His people in the circumstances of life.

This was a sale of the sparrow that was perfectly legal; the money had been paid and all declared fair. What then could anyone have to say about it? So we are in the midst of iron-bound circumstances, as it would seem. Who could take an interest in us? But listen. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" Then God is interested in that sale. A record is made of it in the divine economy. He is also interested in the details of every-day life. No bargain can be made about you, when you may have been involved in any of the circumstances of life, that the infinite God is not at hand to give you help. God is the God of circumstances as well as of Providence, as He tells us in the incident of the sparrow.

They thought that they had done with Paul the preacher of righteousness when they had stoned him and carried him out of the town for dead. But in a little while he was in their midst preaching again as boldly as ever. He was not dead, but was in the height of life. He was more to God than any sparrow.

When our army, a few years ago was camped at Manila, they were attacked by the enemy in the darkness when there was raging a terrible typhoon, such as blinded our men, while the enemy were accustomed to them. "We would have been whipped," said one of our soldiers af-

terward, "had it not been that God clave the sky with the lightning and gave us light by which we took quick aim and so drove the enemy back." That quick flash which at other times would have frightened them, was now welcomed as the means by which they might conquer. So in the providence of God they won the battle, though there were three of the enemy to every one of our soldiers. Did not the God of the sparrow take care of our soldiers?

Poor old Elijah flees in haste from Queen Jezebel whom he has defeated. She threatens to take his life. For the time he forgets that there is over all a hand ruling and governing. But when he has worn himself out with his travels an angel meets him and asks,

"What doest thou here Elijah?" And so he was taught how foolish he was to forget that God could take care of him.

Some years ago there arose a strange character in this country. He came from next to nothing. People laughed at him, for he was awkward and peculiar. They sneered at his poverty. But all the while he went up and up. Like a balloon into which men have stuck pins and then expect to see it collapse, and yet it rises; so he rose higher and higher, until he reached the Presidency. No one but the God of the sparrow guided him and brought him to this high place. If God so cares for the sparrow, will He not care for a President?

Yes God is working in the circumstances of

every moment of every life, bringing about His own great designs. No one performs a single act or thinks a single thought that is not known to the infinite God. We think events go on regardless of any divine help. But it is not so. The events of the world are not independent of God any more than the record of time by any clock is independent of the sun. As all records of time are related to the sun, so all records of deeds are related to God. We go by the clock because it keeps time, that is it keeps the record of the sun before us. The sun is too bright for us to gaze upon, hence the timepiece represents the sun. So the events keep before us the One upon whom we can not look and live and Who is the Providence of every life.

But someone rises and says that his timepiece is set by the Greenwich time and has nothing to do with the sun! Yes, and where did that observatory get its light? Why from the sun, of course. Hence all finally goes back to the sun as the final providence in time. Thus there are people so foolish as to say that they do not need God and are not dependent upon Him, when it is by Him that all things exist.

"But," you ask, "How can God care for the little things of life?" You might as well ask how the watchmaker can care for the little jewel, which seems so unimportant and yet on which the wheel must be balanced. You might as well ask how the keen eyed watchmaker can detect the

bit of dust which gets in the wheel and stops its action. It is his business to look out for just such things; for it is not the great accidents that oftenest stop the timepiece, but the little bits of dust that seem to the common eye so harmless. So it is not the great sins that come to us with all their frightful power that we need most to fear, but the little things which all but the Divine eye may pass by. There is not the slightest sorrow or care or woe or trouble or anxiety that does not concern God and which He does not strive to remove, as the watchmaker strives to have his timepiece free from the difficulties that may hinder its perfect action.

It is a pretty well-known fact that most of the deaths that occur on the field of battle result from bleeding to death before surgical aid arrives. The French government has under consideration a scheme for tattooing the soldiers of the French army with a certain mark over each artery, so that a wounded man would be able to staunch the flow of blood himself and thus increase his chance of living. The soldier does not know his danger, and how he may be free from possibility of death. But the government does, and so provides the way. So we do not know but God does, and cares for us. He who stands by every bargain for a sparrow's life will be with us in every time of trial great or small. A noted author of our land, some time ago received a letter in London with his name on the envelope and " God only

knows where," as the only other mark upon it. The postoffice was the providence to take the message to him. So finally, thought the great author, all things come around in the right way and at the end, though we do not know,—who knows what will become of the bargain about the sparrow and of the sparrow itself? God only knows. So about the ten thousand things which happen to us and over which we have no control. "God only knows," and He will help us to the last. The sparrow is not sold without His notice, but the final issue is with Him.

"I know not where the islands lift,
Their fronded palms in air,
I only know I can not drift
Beyond His love and care."

II. God's care for His people is always had in the impossible moments.

"One of them shall not fall." These are the times over which we have no control. The sparrow was about to be cast aside because worthless or dead. Who would then care for the poor thing? Only God. There are certain things which we must do blindly. There are many times when we can not see. Man soon reaches his limit. Who will then care for him? Only God. At two stages in life kind hands attend us; when we come into life, and again when we go out. It is at these times we are so helpless. Then it is that some

one keeps us. In the times in life when we are smitten with afflictions or cut down by misfortunes and crushed by troubles, that God stands by and says,

"A sparrow shall not fall without my notice and then will you?" "O ye of little faith."

One of them, He divides the smallest purchase of man in halves and takes one of the two. If it had been 1,000 sold for a farthing He would have said "one of them." If there be 10 or 100 or 1,000, or 10,000 in the meeting it will be one of them shall not miss the lessons. If there are 1,000,000 in a city it is, "one of them shall not suffer, without your Father." It was the one lost piece of silver, the one lost sheep and the one lost boy that were sought in the Gospel stories in the fifteenth chapter of Luke; and God has never changed His methods. God does not say we shall not fall, but He does say that when we do, His presence and help are sufficient.

"*One* of them." Then God has a concern for both, the one taken and the one left. They are supposed to be a pair of sparrows,—two sparrows —and shall one be taken away and feel lonely without God's care? God's watchfulness is so infinite as that. Nor shall the separation of loved ones in this world, among God's children escape His notice. Not a pain that strikes through your heart, but is felt by Him; not a pang of separation, but has been fully measured by our God.

The loneliness of separation in life is terrible.

To be alone in a foreign city where there is no one who cares for you, is hard. But to be lonely at home where no one can understand and but few care, that is worse. But the infinite comfort is that there is a God who cares for you in every experience, in every wish, in every feeling. It is then that we understand what the Son of God meant when He said, "He trod the winepress of the wrath of God alone," and cried out on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?"

Will a mother desert her own child when contagious disease has overtaken it and when no one else will give it care? No, no. I knew a mother whose eight-year-old boy was taken with malignant diphtheria. She took him in her arms and cared for him so tenderly. But in a few days the dreadful disease had taken hold of her and rapidly ran its course. So they took the little boy away from her. Then he asked, "Is mamma sick?" They said, yes. Then he asked, "Is mamma dead?" They said, "Yes, she is dead." Then he said, "Don't bury her yet for I'll go too." That night he went. The next day we laid them both away, the little boy in the arms of that mother who had given her life for him. And I thought how in some such way God's care for us had led Him to give the life of His Son not that we might die, but that we may live forever, —that not "one of them" may perish, but that all who will believe may be saved.

III. It is the care of our Father.

Say to the little boy, "Harry's father is coming to-night," and he will play on. But say, "Your father is coming"—then see the alertness of form, the twinkle in the eye and hear the music in his voice. Your father it is who looks after the sparrow, and will care for you.

He has a family interest in the dying bird, and will He not *much more* love and care for us? There is the canary bird. Your mother cares for it and feeds it, but your mother will be much more careful of you, the child of her love.

You trust to the laws of nature. You laugh at the heat, you defy the cold, but the heat will smite you as with iron hand, and the cold will get you at last for what is colder than the lifeless human form? But let your Father care for you and all will be well.

Father? Yes, His care is all around you. The sparrow falls down when it dies, and God's hand is underneath. The spark flies up when it dies, and God's hand is above it. All round has He set His power. Death can not run away with His power.

One shall not fall without your Father. Christ was constantly speaking of the Father. He never for a moment forgot the divine presence of His Father. There is not a sermon or prayer in which it does not occur. He says, "I and My Father are one." "I go to My Father," "My Father is greater than all."

If He who cares for all things will care for us like a Father, how precious must life be. And this is true for we read, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that are His."

It is our Father that stands by every falling bird, every failing purpose, every lost aim, every scene of sorrow, every mount of failure. He sends no delegate. He sends not merely an angel. It is God Himself who marks the sparrow's fall, and cares for every child of His, in every part of life. It is He who says, "I will strengthen thee, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right Hand of My righteousness." "He careth for you," for "two sparrows are sold for a farthing and one of them shall not fall without your Father."

"God will take care of you, be not afraid;
He is your safeguard through sunshine and shade
Tenderly watching and keeping His own,
He will not leave you to wander alone.

God will take care of you through all the day,
Shielding your footsteps, directing your way;
He is your Shepherd, Protector and Guide,
Leading His children where pure waters glide

God will take care of you, long as you live,
Granting you blessings, no other can give,
He will take care of you when time is past,
Safe to His kingdom will guide you at last.

God will take care of you still to the end
O what a Father, Redeemer and Friend,
Jesus will answer, whenever you call
He will take care of you, trust Him for all."

XVI

A BARGAIN WITH GOD

"If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I shall go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God."—*Genesis 28: 20, 21.*

Jacob was fleeing from his father's house to escape the wrath of Esau, whose birthright he had taken. The favourite method of escaping trouble at that time seemed to be that of running away. Moses ran away from his people in Egypt, after he had killed the Egyptian who was disputing with the Israelite; and stayed in that country until called back at the burning bush, by the voice of God. Elijah ran away from Queen Jezebel, at the moment of his victory and her defeat; and was found of God in a fit of the blues under the Juniper tree. David also ran off to the land of the Philistines where he was found acting the part of an insane man. Countless numbers in every age and in every land have tried the same; but all have found that God is everywhere, and will require a meeting with Himself somewhere along the way.

So when Jacob found himself in the presence

of God, when he was cornered and could not get away, he struck for a bargain.

He had just been a party to a sharp bargain which beat Esau out of his right, and he was running away from its effects. He seemed ready to bargain for profit with any one, for here he proposes the conditions of his journey and return. It was to be a commercial contract. Many a man beats Satan in business, but we do not read of any who beat the Almighty. It seemed like a sharp deal, this which he proposes. He was to get his board and clothing and car fare, (such as that was), and for this he was to return one-tenth of all that the Lord gave him.

"If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God, . . . and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

It was a very good contract—fair to both sides, for God accepted and entered into it. In the succeeding ages men have been prone to serve God for a material consideration. The old Saxon priest who heard the Gospel preached by Paulinus, and who had served all the gods as they came along, said as he turned over to the true God,

"All the gods have profited me little. Long years have I served them. No man has been more diligent than I; and now I turn to the true God."

Fortuna was the favourite deity in Rome. But her temple lies in ruin so deep that no hand can rebuild it; and she who was supposed to give good fortune to others has suffered pitiable misfortune, which will last till the end of time. The Negros of Guinea beat their gods, and the New Zealanders threaten to kill and eat theirs if they do not bring good fortune. Even Satan acted on this principle of profit when he argued with God that Job could be tempted to profanity and faithlessness. He said, "Does Job fear God for naught?" . . . Put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face."

But a new factor entered into this contract; it was that of God's part.

I. This bargain rested on his faith in God's constant presence.

"God was in this place and I knew it not," said Jacob. Then upon this he based his faith in God's presence, and said,

"If God will be with me," etc. He had passed beyond the stage of food and clothing. He had also gone beyond the relation of buyer and seller, and sustained relation of sovereign and subject.

It was this relation which now took hold of him. The sovereign is everywhere present in his power. No man can lie down, or rise again, or carry on business without the overshadowing presence of the king. Jacob was still in God's country and

had greater obligation than merely eating or drinking or travelling. It was the relationship of king and subject which had its force in the nature of eternal things.

So there are higher relationships to-day between God and man than the mere bargain for the daily food. Man's bargain with God for his daily supply is in his willingness and in his opportunity to use his muscle, his hand, and his brain. God will respond to every such bargain with a blessing of food and raiment and means of livelihood as with Jacob. But it does not end there. There may come a time in your lives when you will not be able to work, then who will look after you? There may come a time when your life may be attacked, then who is to do you justice; a time when there must be a judge in the case and who will then plead your cause? If you are a citizen of this nation the final authority is in the President, for after all he is the centre of authority and has the pardon power over any state in the nation. Yet he rarely ever uses that power, but it is used for him by others everywhere in the country. So finally every question resolves itself to the relation between you and the sovereign power in the President; and that sovereign power is always present.

So it became a question between Jacob and his God and he said, "God is in this place and I knew it not; and if God will be with me."—

So we have a sovereign, our God, who though

He does not step out and show himself whenever we have a little trouble, any more than the President of the United States does, yet He as truly sways us by His power delegated to others in our behalf; and we say,

"*Truly God* is in this place."

We do not see this source of power and help, but that does not matter. The *roots* of life are all out of sight. It is so with the little violet humbly looking up from the wayside; it is so with the giant oak which sways in the storm; it is so with the musician, who in private studies with the teacher, and after long practice comes out in the grand recital; so with the orator, his practice is all out of sight; and when he comes upon the platform to please and profit, they ask, "How does he do it?" Yet no one can tell. Roots are not intended to show, and if they do, the natural impulse is to cover them over. All sources of life are hidden and yet real and present. Then why should we demand that God the great source of all life should come out and show Himself and His methods before we believe in Him, when nothing else does? It is unreasonable. He never will, and we are too sensible to demand it. We are then, ready to say with Jacob "God is in this place and I knew it not."

The great question is that of knowledge. If we had sufficient knowledge on all hands we would have plenty of faith; rather then, we would not need faith.

The other day a little boy saw his father walking about in his library, as though searching for something. And the child four years old said, "Papa what are you hunting for?" and the father replied in one word, "knowledge." The child at once replied with the assurance of a philosopher, "I'll find you knowledge," and going to the book shelves he took down a large book and handing it to his father said, "Here is knowledge," and it was just the book the father needed. It proved to be the Bible.

So there are statesmen and orators and philosophers and scientists who are groping about for something that is lacking and when the child of God hands him the key to the situation in life, he says with Jacob, "I never before knew this. *God is in this place.*"

This knowledge must be a fact in life and not merely about it. We are passing through a period of uncut edges in literature. There are many who like their Harpers, their Centuries, their McClures, and all the rest, in the most approved style. They like to run the paper knife along the edges and see the pages open. There has been a long period of uncut edges in spiritual things, when the volumes of life have been doubly bound, that is, in the back and the front, and pages only opened in bunches. It was so with Jacob. It has been so with many others, and the cry has been, that God is in this place.

This knowledge is coming by way of the myri-

ads of Christian workers who are living the knowledge of God to the world. The edges of the book of life, have been cut and there is before us an open book of testimony that God is in this place to abide with us. O that the whole world may know this, that the power of beauty and sublimity and mercy and love may become supreme, that all the war that is known shall be the fighting of light against darkness, of heat against cold, of summer against winter, of purity against impurity, of eternal and purified life against death, for God is in this place to help and strengthen.

II. This bargain rested on Jacob's loyalty to God.

"Then shall the Lord be my God," said Jacob. This was to settle his whole future. He had come in line with the providence of God.

Nations have their treaties and alliances by which their relations are maintained and their future is decided, such as the treaty of Ghent, and the Triple alliance.

This was Jacob's alliance with God by which their relations are to be peacefully maintained as long as Jacob should live. It is a question of allegiance, ad lego—to bind together. Thus Jacob was bound by his promise to the true service of that God whom he had learned to trust.

It was everything to Jacob that his life was linked to a greater life. Before him his future

lay beautiful and grand. It is everything to a man to have his relations in life established. A man is great in the business and professional life, according to his connections. A man who represents a company, has the force and power of that company at his command. A man who belongs to a nation may command the force of that government if need be to protect him in a foreign land. So a man's alliance with God places him in possession of such a power, that he, like Jacob, may go even into the greatest dangers of a desert land and have no fear. If God protects a man and gives him bread and raiment and help, he ought to be loyal. Any man who is not, deserves only condemnation and banishment.

Jacob realized the greatness of his companionship with God. It is much in favour of the boy to be with a great strong father that he may learn by constant precept, the true type of manhood which he sees in that father.

It is vastly in favour of the man who can bring his life so under God's law and God's salvation by his belief in Christ, that he can say with all the power of his nature, "The Lord shall be my God," for he then has strength, and his future is secure, though it may not be just what he plans and wishes.

A few days ago a little girl, four years old is said to have travelled all the way from Fort Worth, Texas, to New York City alone and unattended. How? Well, the mother of the child

wrote upon a tag the address of the destination of the child, and by it these words, "*Please do not let me go astray,*" that child was labelled and marked. It is said that on all the trains in which she travelled people vied with one another to show her kindnesses and the ladies so strove together that the conductor at times would designate those who should do the kindnesses for the child, in the evening and in the morning.

"Fortunate child," you say. How could she go astray? The secret is, the child was well marked, and like Jacob of old no one did her harm but all helped her on her journey.

Young men and young women go out from their homes by the thousand, these days to the great cities, and have a hard battle unless they are definitely and decidedly furnished with the mark which all will respect, "Do not let me go astray," as in the case of the child.

"The Lord shall be my God," is the word which makes a man secure. Some have it in the face, others in the kind word, others in the generous deed, others in the whole nature. But somehow in the presence of this power of God the profane jest, the low remark, the evil thought, are out of place, and will soon disappear. One of such noble life is safe on any journey. All unite to help them safely through this world.

The sun has set his mark upon forest, field and flower and makes a gallery of the clouds, by imposing upon them his nature. So God writes His

changing story in the lives of men who will swear allegiance to Him, and may this be our lasting bargain with God, that He shall set His mark upon us clear and plain so all may see,

"Do not let me go astray."
"The Lord shall be my God."

"This was the Bethel, where, on stony bed,
While angels went and came from morn till even,
Our truer Jacob laid His wearied head;
This was to Him the very gate of heaven.

"Yes; death's last hope, his strongest fort and prison,
Is shattered, never to be built again;
And He, the mighty captive, He is risen,
Leaving behind the gate, the bar, the chain."

III. The pledge of the bargain, was a gift from Jacob to God, of one-tenth of all that he should receive.

"And of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

That was a fair bargain and God accepted it. Jacob was at least honest enough to pay interest on his gifts, and that is more than most men are willing to do.

Jacob's religion never did him any good till he began to pay for it. No man's religion is worth the snap of his finger unless he pays for it. It is not that God needed the amount here stated, for he could create worlds by the word of power. But it is that Jacob was to receive the

benefit. There is no parent that delights in seeing the child take the blessings of home without being thankful. There is no business institution that will give out money without the return of a fair interest. There is a feeling everywhere that anything that is worth having is worth paying for at least in some small way. The reason why more people do not have a better religious life is because they do not pay enough for it. They have no investment there and how can they expect a return? How can any man expect to get blessings without some return. There is no such thing in the universe. God has written the law of compensation which is as inexorable as the law of gravity. If one gives, he shall receive. If he does not, he shall not. "If a man does not work, neither shall he eat," is the divine decree. "By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread," said God long ago. It would not be a good or a right thing for a man to receive blessings without paying for them, for he would grow unappreciative and forgetful of his God. All people then who eat of God's bounty should be at least as honest as Jacob. Men cry out against the church, forgetting that the reason why the church seems to them so barren is because they have done nothing and paid nothing for the great cause. Great gifts have indeed been given, but how much mightier would be the Gospel of Christ if all men would pay only a small amount as did Jacob.

Notice now how God set His seal on this bargain by the boundless blessings which Jacob received. He grew rich and great and returned to his own land.

There is no better investment than that given to the great cause of God. By two great agencies the world is to be brought to Christ, that is, by consecrated money, and consecrated men.

May the world speedily learn this great lesson by which Jacob, so wisely profited; and then the universal vision will be far beyond what Jacob first saw, even as beautiful as the poet represents his final view of God's glory.

"I saw again. Behold! Heaven's open door;
Behold! a throne,—the Seraphim stood o'er it,
The white-robed elders fell upon the floor,
And flung their crowns before it.

. . . . . .

"Who dreams of God when passionate youth is nigh,
When first life's weary waste his feet have trod—
Who seeth angel's footfalls in the sky,
Working the works of God;

"His sun shall fade as gently as it rose,
Through the dark woof of death's approaching night
His faith shall shoot, at life's prophetic close,
Some threads of golden light.

"For him the silver ladder shall be set—
His Saviour shall receive his latest breath,
He walketh to a fadeless coronet,
Up through the gate of death."

XVII

THE MAN OF FAITH

"Now faith."—*Heb. 11: 1.*

FAITH is the great cohesive force in human life, for it grasps and holds all things in order. The child has faith in his parents, the boy has faith in his own ability, the farmer in the seasons, the seaman in the stars and his compass, the business man in his opportunities and the Christian in his God. Faith discovered America, is the parent of all inventions, the author of all books, has planted Christianity in all lands and reaches out invisible hands from the future for us to grasp and hold. It is represented everywhere in the Bible and in the world as the power of powers; as in the last seven verses of this eleventh chapter of Hebrews, where it is said that faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, and a hundred other things. And also in that world-famous saying. "This is the victory which overcomes the world even your faith."

How then could God represent this power to man? Not in words, for man would not fully understand. Not in a single individual for man could not believe him, for that was done in Jesus of Nazareth. But it is presented in the

best way in different forms and in different persons, in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

Ideal manhood can not be better represented in a single way than in Westminster Abbey. There may be found the memory of the most noted poets and philosophers and scientists and orators and doctors and preachers and kings and queens. Gather now the best from all of these and you have the greatest material for the man of faith.

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is the Westminster of the Bible, for here the Almighty has gathered the best out of all the past in the persons of Old Testament history as models for the man of faith, and this "now faith" with which the chapter begins, pushes open the door into this temple of immortal fame.

Here we shall study the man of faith in the lives of seven great men. In each of these mentioned in this sacred story the supreme power of his life is chosen and the combination of all of these forms the man of faith as God sees him.

I. Sacrifice is the first power of the man of faith and is found in Abel. "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous . . . and by it being dead yet speaketh." (v. 4.)

In our day foolish people have changed this word sacrifice to mean the giving up, under pro-

test, of anything without hope of return or reward. Religion is considered by them as a beggar or a thief, which takes away all that is pleasant, and leaves only the unpleasant without either the ability or the will to reward. Money placed in the collection basket is too often given as it might be hurled into the sea and considered gone forever and is called a sacrifice.

A very wealthy lady said to a friend after giving a few dollars to a great cause, "There, I am glad I am rid of that bitter dose." But God's bitterness must have been infinitely greater in view of what He had given her, and in view of the fact that that was almost the sum total of her gifts. And yet she called that a sacrifice.

Such people never seem to see that life is a constant giving up, whether one is on God's side or not. Indeed that is the rule of nature. The apple tree gives up one hundred blossoms for every perfected apple, and the mother and father give a thousand ministries to their children for every return of kindness.

But the rule of divine sacrifice is different. Its very meaning is to make sacred; hence it does not always pay in money, but usually in character, which seems harder to get than money, and is infinitely better.

In all the wreck of worlds, character will stand unmoved and unshaken. God Himself can not destroy it and can not even change it unless by the will of the owner. Sacrifice makes sacred

because it is a giving up to God, a touch of the hand which brings the holy life. It was so with Abel, for he gained an immortal character of nobility and an immortal fame, for "he being dead yet speaketh." It was so with Christ Himself who is the final embodiment of all sacrifice.

II. Pleasing God, is the second great power of the man of faith, and has its embodiment in Enoch. "By faith Enoch . . . had this testimony that he pleased God." (v. 5.)

This is a man-pleasing age. The average man tries first of all to please himself, then others, then his God, if he has any time left. Man wants everything to please him and he is angry with God unless the divine decrees seem to work in his favour. He would fain have the terms reversed in the answer to the first question of the Shorter Catechism, so as to read,

"The chief end of God is to glorify man and to enjoy him forever."

The exact opposite of this is the secret of true greatness. The happiness of the world depends on how well we please God. This is the highest standard of excellence, for God is our Father and as a mere policy it is wise to please a father.

The children in their joys and sorrows in the family have an influence upon the parents, and every traveller is cheered or discouraged by the smile or frown upon the face of the man whom he meets but once along the way. How much

more then is the great sensitive nature of God moved by the conditions of life which are pleasing or displeasing to Him. Like Enoch we are to come into this condition of pleasing God.

Fra Angelico failed in painting the Inferno, because he was not acquainted with that kind of life. But he succeeded gloriously in painting Paradise because he led a life which pleased God. This was the great principle which brought us safely through the war of the rebellion in our own land. President Lincoln several times was asked to have days of prayer appointed to plead with God to be on our side. He always replied that it was more important for us to know that we are on God's side. To be on God's side is to be in harmony with His plan and will. This made Enoch and Isaiah, and Moses and Paul and ten thousand others great. This is to walk with God as did Enoch. There are musical instruments which are hardly ever in tune, and if they are tuned properly they will go off again before one selection is finished. There are such people in the world. They are hardly ever in tune with their Maker and can seldom be played upon by the divine hand. It must make God angry, to have such creatures differ with Him, and to rise up and say that He does not know,—that His word is not His word and that He did not know what He said when He wrote it, and could not keep without error what He had written. Would it not be strange for a crying infant to try to tell a man how to write a book or build a house, or

cast up the accounts in the ledger? And yet there would be more sense in that than for man to attempt to tell God how to write His Bible. There are men who are ready with just such instruction. How much better to be in tune with God, to please Him as did Enoch.

There is a great painting which represents the workman standing with hammer in hand, ready to bring the great bell which he is making into tune. The tone for the bell is given by an instrument, in the hand of one, who as he strikes the strings looks up as though the sound was to come from the sky. Now when the bell has the key and is in tune, it will never change so long as it is a bell. Strike it by day or night, by summer or winter, in heat or in cold, and it sings the same clear, sweet, unchanging song. The bell has been raised above all conditions of heat and cold that surround it, when it is brought into tune. So we are brought into harmony with heaven and lifted above the conditions of earth that surround us, that we may please God, uniting with Christ in the great aim of His life when He said, "I do always the things that please the Father."

III. Fear, is the third great power of the man of faith, and is represented in Noah, who "through fear prepared an ark for the saving of himself and house." (v. 7.)

There was danger ahead and he was warned to avoid it. A religion that does not warn of

impending danger is a snare and a delusion. As elsewhere, so here, God has set a signal of warning at every danger point. He has set the buoys all along the sea of life that we may know the safe course. Why do you avoid the fire? Because you fear you may be burned. Why do you not drink poison willingly? Because you know it will kill. Why do you not tempt the murderer? Because you fear he may take your life. Why do you not tamper with sin? Because it is more deadly and dangerous than all of these. Every man has some mighty torrents to face, and they roll their waves higher and higher. Yet in this there is nothing to affright more than the flood of Noah's day frightened him. When God tells us there is danger in the poison of sin in any form, we should be afraid of its presence and power and so avoid it as did Noah in his righteous fear. In this we have the saying of the Holy One, when He says, "Fear not them which kill the body, but rather fear Him who is able to cast both soul and body in hell."

IV. Obedience is the fourth great power of the man of faith, as found in Abraham. "By faith Abraham . . . obeyed and went out not knowing whither he went." (v. 8.)

It is a hard thing to go forward in absolute darkness. But it can be done. In doing this Abraham did no more than is done every day by

the man learning mathematics. His evidence comes only as he goes on. He first obeys the laws of mathematics and then he becomes their master and works as he will.

A few years ago a test was made of the various penitentiaries of this country and it was found that ninety per cent. of all the inmates gave as the principal cause of their ruin, disobedience to parents.

A man who disobeys the law of God,—as surely finds himself in trouble. To him life is all corners, and he is forever knocking against them. It is a wicked fallacy that we are absolutely free and can do as we please. It would not be best of it were true. Obedience is the law of order and happiness.

John Ruskin expresses this, emphasizing the great Bible truth when he says that with a foundation of a cathedral provided, all the rest is obedience. In building the walls one must obey the law of gravity. In rearing the arch, one must obey the law of resistance. In lifting the tower, one must obey the laws of symmetry and proportion. So we see that man builds not as he wills, but in obedience to these laws of the universe. Why, the planets are not independent, but they must obey the sun. The tides go and come, not as they please, but are led by the moon. The rivers must keep within their channels. The dead leaf, because it can no longer obey any other force, is pulled down from the tree by gravity

or whisked off by the wind, and death sets to work with nimble fingers to pull it to pieces. So obedience is the great law of all life from Adam and Abraham down. Even Christ asserted His loyalty to God when He said, "I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." Adam in Eden disobeyed; Christ in Gethsemane and on Calvary obeyed. Which will you take as your example?

V. THE FUTURE is the fifth great power of the man of faith. "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." (v. 20.)

This was the father's last will and testament. A man can easily will to his son land and estates, but how can he give him the future? If every father could bequeath a definite successful future to his son, what a changed world this would be! Isaac could not do that, nor can any father now, but this expresses the importance of the question of the future. It is this foresight of faith that throws out the picket line further and further, and sends spies on ahead to bring in an encouraging report. It is this "concerning things to come" that makes to-morrow, and next week and next year and eternity, interesting. It pushes open every door of possibility and clears away the clouds, that hope may shine bright in the day of gloom. It assures the fulfillment of all our highest hopes and greatest promises of the Bible.

It is this foresight of faith, which leads on as one lost in the forest, is led by the shining of a newly found light, as Christian in Pilgrim's Progress saw the bright light at the gate of the celestial city. It was the same that led the Son of God to say,

"Behold, ye shall see greater things than these," when the Son of God shall come in power and great glory. "Things to come"—the foresight of faith is the fifth great power of the man of faith.

VI. WORSHIP is the sixth great power of the man of faith, and is represented in Jacob who, "blessed the two sons of Joseph, leaning on the top of his staff." (v. 21.)

It is worship that blesses the world. It is the generating force for all hope and faith, the electric battery which holds the power till it goes forth on its mighty mission. Worship brings an intimate acquaintance with God. Worship is the sun which cheers the world with its light, the rain which refreshes the soil, which deserves the Almighty's wrath. God said He would save Sodom if only ten righteous persons could be found. And there is many a city and many a man who may thank God's worshipping people for mercy and life. Sweep away all churches and all the places of worship, refuse man the upward look, never allow him to turn his ear to catch a sound of the voice of his Maker, cast a

cloud over the sky so thick that even hope can not go through, erase from memory all thoughts of God, and you will have a world as though without an atmosphere, a land without a shade, a forest without a rustling leaf or moving bough, a humanity without a smile, a life without a hope, a world of woe and not a world of worship. Which would you rather have? It is worship that heals a stricken world, for Christ comes and asks, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Worship then is the sixth power of the man of faith.

VII. Choice is the seventh (the perfect number) great power of the man of faith, and Moses is its embodiment, for he "chose rather to suffer with the people of God," (v. 25) than to be king of Egypt.

This is the decision of destiny, and of all God's creation is the exclusive prerogative of man. It is the selecting of a definite course to be forever followed. No man drifts into goodness any more than a ship drifts safely into port from a surging sea. Choice is the helm of the ship which is set firm and strong for a definite harbour. It was not easy for Moses to make this choice, but it was for life and when he looked upon his destiny, he dared not turn back, and so he became the world's greatest law-giver and God's mighty servant. It is choice that changes a boy into a man, moves the business of the world along a secure plane, and makes giants in a day. Thus the

Davids become greater than the Goliaths, Moses greater than Pharaoh, Paul greater than Nero, and the true Christian greater than any earthly king; for ye are more than conquerors, through Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us. Choice is the crowning power of the completed man. By it he may enter heaven and become a king, a priest unto God, through Christ the Saviour.

"Once to every man and nation,
Comes the moment to decide,
In the strife 'twixt truth and falsehood,
For the good or evil side,
And the choice goes by forever
'Twixt the darkness and the light."

XVIII

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—*St. John 3: 16.*

So beautiful and so perfect is this text, that to preach from it seems almost like an attempt to deepen the colour of the violet, or to brighten the burnished gold, or to add lustre to the newly cut diamond, or to polish the swift flying sunbeam. Yet we are justified in this study by the fact that we do not try to add anything of human word or thought, but rather to take from it the great life lessons.

This is the best known and most loved of all the verses in the Bible. To everyone it is something, to some it is everything. To one it is like the love call of the bird to its mate, when lost in the forest. To another it is like the opening day with reddening sky and bursting light, the revealer of unnumbered blessings. To another it is like the sun shining, in all his noonday glory; and to another it is like the opening of the door of heaven.

It has brought peace to the human heart in every land for eighteen hundred years. Yet its

message is always new. The sweet perfume from the rose, which you now enjoy is not the same as that of yesterday, though it may seem the same. The light flashed from the diamond and flying from the sun at this instant is not the same as that of a moment ago, though the eye may not detect the difference. So this text has new lessons for us though it has filled the world with peace, and charmed the soul of man for centuries.

Every one should be interested in this text for it contains as its subjects the three greatest persons of time and eternity; that is, God, Christ, and man; and because it contains as its predicates the three greatest acts of time and eternity—that is God loving, Christ saving and man believing and being saved. It is this double trinity of truth which is now to engage our attention.

I. GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD.

You might write, in a general way, as a completion of that phrase, everything good in the world, for all good is the act of God because He loves us.

God so loved the world that He arranged the times, and seasons, and provided the winds, and the seas and the tides, and the balancing of all forces. God so loved the world that He has sown the seeds of good broadcast in the earth, so that though there be briars and thorns, there are also lilies and roses; though there be weeds and

thistles there are also grains and grasses; and over them waves like a banner, and in them like a safe-locked gem is this promise that while man lives, seed time and harvest, summer and winter shall never cease.

God so loved the world that though there be weeping and wailing in one home, in ten are heard the sound of singing and the shout of gladness.

God so loved the world that His own people shall not stand on the brink of earth's rivers and tasting say with those of long ago—Marah, it is bitter, for the tree of life has been cast in, and the water is sweet.

God so loved the world, that His people shall not stand one or five thousand strong, and faint of hunger when they have followed their Master, as did those of His own day, to hear His word, but they shall all be fed and there shall be many basketsfull remaining.

God so loved the world that in the ten commandments He has set a bound to every human action, and says, as to the waves of the sea,

"Thus far shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

God so loved the world that He has made His Word so plain that he who runs may read; that is, that he who rushes to his business in the morning and rushes back again in the evening, may read the truth as easily as he reads the sign boards along the way.

And all this that the greatest act of His infinite love might be a success among men, that He might send His only begotten Son who came between us and God's righteous wrath. Someone had to come between, if we were to live. Adam in Eden proved this when he hid away from the presence of God putting the trees and even the leaves between himself and his God. Every man proves this who tries to put time or space or his own thought or anything between himself and his God. So God puts His own Son between His wrath and us. It is like the son, who in the home has wantonly violated his privileges and dishonoured his parents; when every impulse of justice says, "Smite, smite," and yet love holds back the father's hand and he says, "Mother, you go and talk to him till my anger cools." And the mother becomes the intercessor. So when the anger of God was justly aroused, He sent His Son to help us, and when He had to strike as He did, Christ, instead of us, received the blow.

So in this greatest act of Christ, in the best way, He reveals God. It is the full sized picture of the Almighty restraining His anger, not because He is moody and petulant but because He is great and strong, and hates sin. Greater than to smite is it to have the power to smite, when that would be just, and yet to withhold the hand and give blessings instead. It is this mighty love of God that put Christ between Himself and us and made Him to bear our sins and suffer for

us in our place. He is indeed our intercessor, going—staying—between; for we are told that He is at the right hand of the Father forever to intercede. Man loves the world for what he can get out of it. God loves the world for what He can put into it, and hence He sent His best, His only begotten Son. Such love goes beyond the measure of the surveyor's chain, surpasses all the possible computations of Euclid, has a wider swing than the sun and stars, outruns man's fleetest imagination outflies God's swiftest angels. It is God's infinite love which is so great that it touches all life somewhere and somehow.

"Could we with ink the ocean fill,
Were the whole world of parchment made,
Were every single stick, a quill,
And every man a scribe;
To write the love of God alone
Would drain the ocean dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky."

II. He gave His only begotten Son.

A little German girl, it is said, went into her father's printing office one day, when they were printing the Bible, and taking up a piece of paper from the floor read, "For God so loved the world that He gave,"—then she stopped for the rest was torn away. So she went to her father to have him finish the sentence. And when she had heard all, she said she thought it was strange

that God should give anything and especially His Son, the best He had.

It is to read the rest of the sentence that we are here.

God *gave,* not sold, His Son. It cost Him a great deal. So far as we know this is the only thing that cost God greatly and this cost Him the most. Look around and you will see that nature cost Him little or nothing. It was a pleasure to Him to create the worlds, sending them forth, each into its appointed place; for He merely spoke and it was done. Providence, sustaining and providing for all things costs Him nothing for that is His nature. So generous is His great heart, that He provides for and takes care, sometimes in the best way, of His worst enemies. He likens Himself to the sun which shines on the evil and on the good; and to the rain which falls on the just and unjust. Yes, His providence is His nature.

But when you come to His grace, you find that it cost Him, not only the coming of His Son into the world, away from the glories of heaven, but also the disgrace of His most humiliating death.

Hence it is that God suffers when He yearns over the sinner, as is proved by the most vivid pictures in the Bible; as when David cries out for his son Absalom who had been fighting against him and who had driven the old king here and there as a fugitive, when he was a righteous king,

"O Absalom, Absalom, would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son." So God suffers. Again we have the picture in Luke the fifteenth chapter where the father of the prodigal watches all that time for his wayward boy—looking and longing for his return. He sees him afar off before anyone else ever sees him, and His great heart cries out in gladness when the son comes. So God does not wish that any should perish but that all should come and be saved.

Lately there has appeared in the world a living wonder, a mere girl, Helen Keller, deaf, dumb, and blind, who has gone into the literary world and walked among the most difficult problems, as a florist would walk in a garden of roses. She has carried off nearly all the prizes in sight of people who had good eyes, as easily as Sampson carried off the gates of Gaza. But more wonderful is Miss Sullivan who teaches Helen Keller, for she undertook the apparently hopeless task of waking a sleeper, to whom she could not call for she was deaf, whose voice she could not hear because she is dumb, and who seemed in every way beyond human reach. But Miss Sullivan had a pity and a love for her so she made the attempt. At first Miss Keller resisted every attempt until Miss Sullivan had to conquer her by physical force. Night and day for seven long weeks she watched by her side to catch the first sign of life in that seemingly dead soul. It was the

hardest work she ever did, she says; but at the end of that time the sleeper began to stir, then to arise, then life became a tremendous power. It was like one clothed with new endowments. She hungered, and almost fought for more knowledge until they had to restrain her eagerness.

So God comes in His sympathy and love to rouse us from the dead. How hard it is—only infinite love could stand the strain, for He comes to us while we are dead in trespasses and sins and bears with us, not for seven weeks alone, but for months and years, yea for life. At first we are obstinate and sullen, like the blind girl, then we begin to feel the new life coming in, then we hunger and thirst for the things we once hated; and rising up into new life, we love the God who so loved us as to give His only begotten Son that we might live.

Is God touched with our needy condition? Will God save us?

What can it mean? Is it aught to Him
That the nights are long and the days are dim?
Can He be touched by the griefs I bear
Which sadden the heart and whiten the hair?
Around His throne are eternal calms
And strong glad music of happy psalms,
And bliss unruffled by any strife—
How can He care for my poor life?

And yet I want Him to care for me,
While I live in the world where sorrows be.

When the lights die down on the path I take,
And strength is feeble and friends forsake,
When love and music that once did bless,
Have left me to silence and loneliness;
And life's-song changes to sobbing prayers—
Then my heart cries out for the God who cares.

When shadows hang o'er me the whole day long,
And my spirit is bowed with shame and wrong,
When I am not good and the deeper shade
Of conscious sin makes my heart afraid;
And the busy world has too much to do
To stay in its course to help me through;
And I long for a Saviour—can it be
That the God of the universe cares for me?"

O wonderful story of deathless love,
Each child is dear to the Heart above,
He fights for me when I can not fight,
He comforts me in the gloom of night,
He lifts the burden for He is strong,
He stills the sigh and wakens the song,
The sorrows that bow me down He bears,
And loves and pardons, because He cares."

III. Everlasting life. "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Everlasting life? You could not expect less of an everlasting God. He gives it on two everlasting principles, that of His own love, "For God so loved," and that of His Son's life, "That He gave His only begotten Son."

To keep the temporal life going man spends six days out of seven—and some spend the sev-

enth also,—313 out of 365 days, and then the body almost breaks down and often comes with clatter and clank, like an old conveyance to each succeeding mile post, barely making the goal.

But everlasting life is like the mariner who stands on the bridge of his ship, braving the storms that come and go, heeding not the rocks that are hidden in the watery ways of the deep, for he is sure he will enter the homing port. It is like the eagle that rises from the shadowy woodland, and in defiance of earth's conditions, swings itself into the higher air, and into the very eye of the sun. Everlasting life is the outlay of God in the person of His own Son who stays the hand of vengeance until the hand of mercy has ministered and ministered even to seventy times seven, and until forgiveness has run out into infinite enumeration. The everlasting outlay of God means the everlasting life of man.

Now there is something in every one to remind God of this, if He ever could forget, which He cannot,—that is, His image which we bear, and by which we are like Him. The night was never so dark but there is somewhere a glimmer of light, which tells of the star from which it came. The coin can not go so far from its own country into any land on earth as to lose the image of its author and owner. But it must be brought back again to its own land before it can pass currency and be of use.

No man has gone so far from God that God

can not find in him this image and superscription of the royalty of heaven, and God's chief business among men is to bring man back to the place where he may be of value to himself and his God. When God sees this image, He sees it not as it would appear to the eye of man, but as it appears to His own perfect eye. He sees the work in its finished form, with all possibilities realized and all hopes crowned with a golden crown, and we are complete in Him.

When God created Adam, that was not the end, else He would have said, let us make Adam in our image and likeness, nor was Moses or David or Paul the end, else He would have said let us make these. But He did say, "Let us make *man.*" There was a wide horizon for a great possibility. What might not man then become? So God loves to look at what we may become. He sees past the blotches and blurs and wrinkles and wounds and scars, to the best that is in us and before us. The more divine we become the less do we see each other's defects.

There was a rejected block of marble in the chip yard of one of the great artists of Florence. It had been rejected by all the great men of that great city. But there came by a mere boy, and looking upon it he saw something wonderful.

The marble was chipped and cracked and seamed and discoloured, but he saw it not, for only that wonderful image rose before him. He began work upon it, and for months kept steadily

at his work, seeing only that beautiful thing which no one else could see. All the while the older artists laughed at him for wasting his time. But when they removed the scaffolding and took away the chips and brushed off the dust and displayed the most wonderful statue of David the young shepherd boy, they all stood in amazement and said: "Michael Angelo,"—for it was he,— "thou hast made an eternal thing." And you will almost think so too if you will go to Florence and see it as it now stands, supreme over all sculpturing in that great city.

So God sees the most wonderful thing in the life rejected by man, and sets about to bring it out, on and on He works, though man may jeer and mock, until that new creation stands crowned with an everlasting crown, and is a king forever.

It is a better life than that of Eden, for that was in man's hand and could be thrown away, and was thrown away. But this life which we live in Him is in God's hands, and no one shall ever pluck it out.

This is the only kind of life which is eternal, and can perpetuate itself. Machinery will rattle and bang and break down some time, the bird will one day cease to fly, though it may have passed from continent to continent. Man will cease from being on this earth, though he may have passed one hundred mile-stones. But here is a life that goes on and on, in spite of days and years and time and eternity. The only true per-

petual motion is the life of God in the soul ever moving and carrying it on toward a fuller realization. Now the earth is just the soil in which this life is to grow, but its product is not to be of the earth, as the wheat is not like the soil from which it springs. From the worst decay of swamps and rivers rise the snow-white water lilies, spreading themselves in the sunlight like fairy ships of beauty. So we grow amid the death and decay of this world, ourselves rising higher and higher into the pure life of God, because we have everlasting life in Him.

An old fable says a monk in other days looked so long and intently upon the image of the crucified Saviour that the print of the nails came into his hands. This may be a fable as to the monk's hands, but it is a fact as to the soul that looks upon Him, for "when we see Him, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Here then lies the secret of final rewards—that is, in everlasting life, for we shall carry nothing to heaven save that which has taken hold of the soul.

It is not how much money have you, but how much have you translated into life; not how much power do you hold, but how much have you arranged to keep; not how much sway have you over the hearts and lives of man, but how much sway over yourself, and how much sway has God over you.

And the way is perfectly open to this. God

does not say, "Ask and ye shall receive," and then when the hand is extended for the needed favour, smite the hand instead of giving the gift. God says, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you," and no man ever knocked and then had the door of Providence slammed in his face. God never said to anyone, "Come unto Me all ye that are weary,"—and then when they came sent them out again into a busy world to carry the burdens for beggars and loafers. God has made ample provision for everlasting life. You ought to clothe the body well, but you ought to clothe the soul better, for it has a longer life to live. You ought to feed the body well, but you ought to feed the soul better, for it has a longer race to run. You ought to teach the hand well, but you ought to teach the soul better, for it has a greater work to do. You ought to set before the eye a bright star of hope, but you ought to set before the soul an eternal light, for the soul shall live forever.

Come then you who are misunderstood and misrepresented and who seem to have failed on earth, and you will find your success in heaven. Come those who have approached near to the edge of the grave, with empty hands, but full hearts. Come those from whom is fading the light of this world, and behold the light from heaven which never pales as does the star, and which never sets as does the sun. Come those who have forgotten most of the things of earth which come fluttering by like birds of October in

their flight to the sunny southland, come all of you, and receive the reward that will never perish and never pass away. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is the grand consummation toward which we are surely going.

We are like the ship in the gulf stream, headed for a northern port. On the prow are our hopes and aspirations, our longings of the better nature, like free men looking anxiously for the harbour, and watching the star, that progress may be made aright. While down in the hold of the ship like prisoners, are anger, and hatred, and jealousy,—the lower powers of the nature. Yet all are going, for the gulf stream bears us up, and the wind hurries us along. But e'er long the prisoners shall be set free, and shall join those on the outlook for the harbour. So the whole man—complete and strong, with face set to an eternal future, shall come safely into the homing port, and we shall know God—for "this is life eternal that ye may know Thee and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." "For God so loved, and Christ so died, and man so believes and is saved."

"Take heart O soul of sorrow and be strong,
There is one greater than this whole world's wrong,
'Tis no avail to bargain, sneer and nod,
And shrug the shoulders in reply to God.
Be still before this high benignant power
That moves wool-shod thro' sepulchre and tower."

XIX

THE GREAT RANSOM

The Son of man came . . . to give His life a ransom for many.—*Matthew 20: 28.*

It has long since been conceded that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." But all have not realized that it was a free act on the part of Christ. This is the lesson of the text, "The Son of man came to give Himself a ransom for many." It is not the vision of a God in the plenitude of His power, holding vast and absolute sway with every possible show of authority; but it is the vision of the Great God disrobing Himself, laying aside His sceptre, and coming down from His throne to the level of fallen humanity.

It was a question of human rights, of preferment and honour, that had just been discussed before Christ voiced these words. The mother of the Zebedee boys went to Christ to ask that her two sons might sit the one on His right hand and the other on His left, in His kingdom. Poor woman; she did not know that such places are attained not by mere gift, but by the payment in suffering and endurance, of one's very life. Christ

the Son of God reached the highest point of worth and honour ever known on earth; He has the highest place in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, but these He attained through the deepest, darkest suffering.

I. The Son of man gave His life.

This is the last thing that man is willing to give for his fellow man,—his life. It is the first thing that God bestows. It was not that Christ did not enjoy His Father's presence in heaven, that He came on earth; it was not that He was insensible to suffering and pain that He came; it was not that man deserved or dared to ask anything, but because first of all He could not bear to see suffering.

It was His habit to go where He might find the sick, and the lame, and the blind, and the palsied, that He might relieve them of their diseases. It was because of His great desire to save life. Somehow His tender heart was touched with the cry of the sufferers from earth, and He at once gave His life for them.

"It was a hot day in July 1864, and Gen. Grant was after us," said an old Confederate. "Our men had hurriedly dug rifle-pits to protect themselves from the Federal sharpshooters, and dead and dying Feds were lying up to the very edge of those pits.

"In one of the pits was an ungainly, raw, red-headed boy. He was a retiring lad, green as grass,

but a reliable fighter. We never paid much attention to him, one way or another.

"The wounded had been lying for hours unattended before the pits, and the sun was getting hotter and hotter. They were suffering horribly from pain and thirst. Not fifteen feet away, outside the rifle-pit, lay a mortally wounded officer who was our enemy.

"As the heat grew more intolerable, this officer's cries for water increased. He was evidently dying hard, and his appeals were of the most piteous nature. The red-headed boy found it hard to bear them. He had just joined the regiment and was not yet callous to suffering. At last, with tears flooding his grimy face, he cried out:

"'I can't stand it no longer, boys! I'm goin' to take that poor feller my canteen.'

"For answer to this foolhardy speech, one of us stuck a cap on a ramrod and hoisted it above the pit. Instantly it was pierced by a dozen bullets. To venture outside a step was the maddest suicide. And all the while we could hear the officer's moans:

"'Water! water! Just one drop, for God's sake, somebody! Only one drop!'

"The tender-hearted boy could stand the appeal no longer. Once, twice, three times, in spite of our utmost remonstrance, he tried unsuccessfully to clear the pit. At last he gave a desperate leap over the embankment, and once on the other

side, threw himself flat upon the ground and crawled toward his dying foe. He could not get close to him because of the terrible fire, but he broke a sumac bush, tied to the stick his precious canteen, and landed it in the sufferer's trembling hands.

"You never heard such gratitude in your life. Perhaps there was never any like it before. The officer was for tying his gold watch on the stick and sending it back as a slight return for the disinterested act. But this the boy would not allow. He only smiled happily, and returned, as he had gone, crawling amid a hailstorm of bullets. When he reached the edge of the pit, he called out to his comrades to clear the way for him, and with a mighty leap he was among us once more. He was not even scratched.

"He took our congratulations calmly. We said it was the bravest deed we had seen during the war. He did not answer. His eyes had a soft, musing look.

"'How could you do it?' I asked in a whisper later, when the crack of the rifles ceased for a moment.

"'It was something I thought of,' he said, simply. 'Something my mother used to say to me. "I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink," she said. She read it to me out of the Bible, and she taught it to me until I never could forget it. When I heard that man crying for water I remembered it. The words stood still in my head.

I couldn't get rid of 'em. So I thought they meant me—and I went. That's all.'

"This was the reason why the boy was ready to sacrifice his life for an enemy. And it was reason enough," added the soldier, with a quavering voice.

So it was Christ who could not bear to hear the cry of His enemies. He knew He was the only one who could help, so He gladly came.

> "He saw me ruined in the fall,
> He flew to my relief."

But He gave His life because those to be saved are related to Him, though enemies. We are all children in the great family of God. There is no earthly parent who will carelessly see his child leave home and go out into suffering. His mind will attend him, and if there be an older brother he will most likely be sent to find him and bring the wanderer home. And Christ is this One who comes to recover us from the lost condition. A faint picture of this is given in an incident which occurred five days after the terrible flood at Johnstown, Pa., in 1889, when so many lives were lost.

A daily paper of that time says:

"The first body taken from the ruins this morning was that of a boy named Davis, who was found in the debris near the bridge. He was badly bruised and burned.

"The remains were taken to the undertaking rooms at the P. R. R. station, where they were

identified as those of Willie Davis. The boy's mother had been making a tour of the different morgues for the past few days, and was just going through the undertaking rooms, when she saw the remains of her boy being brought in. She ran up and demanded the remains, and seemed to have lost her mind. She caused quite a scene by her actions, but calmed down after a while and stated that she had lost her husband and six children in the flood and that this was the first one of the family that had been recovered. She said she had not slept a wink since Saturday, and had visited the different morgues at least 100 times."

Sad story, this. She was looking for her own, and how she endured those wakeful days and nights in the midst of that awful desolation to find them. So it is that Christ has come forth into a desolate storm-swept earth, that He may find and redeem His own. He is our Elder Brother; and would not a brother help one who belongs to the same family?

Then He gave His life to establish His great cause.

Some time ago, it is said, a young clerk in a drug store in Baltimore, began the study of medicine and surgery. His active mind developed religious as well as scientific enterprise, and both in church circles and among the poor he became known as a working Christian and "a born doctor."

After about five years of practice in the United States Marine Hospital, his fearless missionary zeal outgrew his place, and he begged the Presbyterian Board of Missions to send him to the most difficult station in their field. They sent him to Bangkok, Siam.

When he set out he had spent every dollar of his own money for medicines, surgical instruments and other supplies, and several wholesale druggists had generously helped him to stock his "chest." With this outfit and the small pay of a foreign missionary to depend upon for his living, he reached Bangkok, and opened a dispensary.

His skill soon gave him reputation, and in less than a year he had successfully treated over three thousand cases. The fame of his work, reached the king, who sent to offer him the position of government doctor—or surgeon-general. After long hesitation, with the approval of the Presbyterian Board, he finally accepted the office. The salary was seven thousand dollars a year, but he retained only his usual missionary stipend, turning all the rest over to the Board.

The new position gave him power that no man could use better than he. He began at once to organize medical schools and establish hospitals; and his plans were so well carried out that within five years the Siamese ceased to send their young men to foreign countries to be educated as doctors. His wonderful success has won him the

warmest favour of the king, and he is now a court physician. The Baltimore doctor is still a Christian missionary, with no ambition but duty.

How like that One who came from heaven not to receive money but to establish a great cause.

I read a few days ago that a physician in St. Louis, had arranged to be enclosed with a leper in a pest house, to nurse the man who had this dreadful disease. He bade farewell to his wife and children and friends, took his books and papers with him into the fatal house.

You ask why was he so foolish? He is doing it, we are told, for the cause of science. He is to make the experiments and record the results for future use in treating such cases. He is to give his life for the cause of medicine and in the hope of relieving other sufferers. What a noble ambition! How few there are, who would do such a thing. Yet Christ did far more than that; for He was the God coming to help man, instead of a man helping his fellow man. Christ was like the Emperor Menelik, of Abyssinia, who has for a long time given great attention to Western civilization, and has recently turned his interest to fitting himself for the work of a physician. He spends a large part of his time in a hospital, watching with keen interest the surgical operations. The emperor often expresses astonishment at the skill of the surgeons, and is most pleased when he can be of some service to them, holding a limb or a roll of bandages. He

is at present planning to build an immense hospital at Adis Aheda, the capital of his nation, and when it is finished he intends to take the entire control of the surgical department. It is certainly a royal spirit which prompts him to be a blessing to his subjects. In that respect he is following the example of the King of kings, who went about doing good.

A king in a hospital! What a sight! And that he should take entire control of the surgical department. Who would not love to have the skill of a king when injured? It would almost pay to be injured to have those tender hands to help. It is the cause of a king that is being established. So it is that Christ the King of kings comes into this sinful world, this hospital of sickness and suffering and takes charge of all, for He says in this very verse with the text, that He comes "not to be ministered unto but to minister."

He will not permit any one to do His work. We will be cared for by His own tender, gentle hands for He came to give His life a ransom for us.

II. A RANSOM. The Son of man came to give His life a ransom.

"Held for $25,000 ransom!" That was the news flashed over the country from Omaha, some time ago, about a rich man's son. But this was not any great news. The same story might be

read on the face and in the life of every son of Adam down, except One who became the ransom for many. Everyone was sold unto sin, and did not have the amount asked by the captors. The challenge to Mr. Cudehay was at once accepted by him and paid. He considered it a hard bargain, but it was the best he could do; and fortunately for the boy he was rich enough to pay it.

Sin made a bold challenge to the Almighty. The only price possible was the life of His only Son. He accepted the situation and fortunately for us, He was rich enough in love and in grace, and so He paid it. No wonder the angels sang the " Glory to God in the highest," over the fields of Bethlehem when Christ came a ransom for many. Bought back again by the Son of God, and that by His life! No wonder rolling time sustained a jar that changed her calendar!

Listen all ye who are bound by habits of sin, evil thoughts and life of failure, Christ has come and has given His life a ransom. He has paid the full price and no sin great or small can ever dispute this. Satan himself must yield. The villains who stole the rich man's son in Omaha, accepted the amount and were honest enough to deliver up their prey. So, sin is fair enough to yield—it must yield when the full price in the life and death of Christ is paid. Only let us see that we are not stolen again by the same sin.

This story comes from a neighbouring city,

"Sold twice as a slave as early as 1824 and having lived in three centuries, Mrs. Susan Quinn, colored, 101 years of age, is lying ill at her home.

"Mrs. Quinn was born in Washington in 1800 and resided in that city until twenty years of age. She was then seized and bound over as a slave. Her first master was named Tinser Engle. Later she was sold to another slave dealer, a Frenchman, named Baron Higgins. After keeping her for a few years Higgins set her free, when she was about thirty years of age.

She did not enjoy her freedom long before she was again seized, but she sent to Washington and secured her freedom certificate, upon presentation of which her captor released her."

Beautiful story, that when the old habit, the old sin, the old Devil, lays hands on us, having been ransomed by the Son of God who gave His life for us, we produce our "freedom certificate," and the captor will release us.

In our case the "freedom certificate" is a life, —the life of the Son of God. So well is this known that no one will dispute it for a moment. Let it be known that we were purchased; not with gold or silver or any such thing, but by the precious blood of Jesus, and the power of sin will flee.

All men may thus understand the importance of this divine ransom. It is a beautiful quality when seen anywhere. Who does not admire the

lion that dies defending his young? The man who is not touched with the loyalty of the dog that dies to save his master, has no tender feeling. The little sparrow fights a great battle when it darts at the hawk again and again as it defends its young, so that all passing by say, "Truly it is a little hero."

But when the Son of God comes and stands between us and the calamity of the ages, that is, the guilt and power of sin; and receives its effect in Himself and pays the full price, it seems that men would run to Him to accept His infinite kindness, and that the angels must weep for the man who passes it by. The whole world would have scorned the youth in the west, who was stolen, if when his father had paid the full price, he had said, "O I'll not accept the offer. I will stay here with these men who have stolen me." You say he would be a fool! Yes, and you would be right, and yet he would be a Solomon in wisdom compared with those who do not accept the offer of Christ's ransom. They will one day find themselves the colossal fools of the ages.

III. For many.

"The Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many." Why not for all? Because all would not accept. The ransom is sufficient for all, if all were willing to receive it.

We are told that when the negroes of the South were freed, some went out and said to their fel-

lows working in the field, "We are free." But the others gazed in wonder and said nothing. They said again, "We are free men; come let us give three cheers." But the stupid fellows did not cheer, but turned to their work and refused to be liberated. The Emancipation Proclamation was meant for them as much as for those who accepted its great offer. It was sufficient for all. So the great ransom of God in Christ, is sufficient for every man, woman and child in all the world. In this there is neither Greek, nor Jew, nor Roman, nor Turk nor American. All are alike before God so far as the grant of the ransom is concerned. He will give it to as many as believe on Him and do His gracious will.

Who can guess the happiness of the ransomed? Who can tell the joy that filled the home of the Western millionaire when his son returned after he had been ransomed for $25,000? Who can tell of the gladness with which one returning to Christ shall be received. No wonder they killed the fatted calf when the prodigal returned! No wonder it is said that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that comes home to His Father's house. Who would not be faithful after such a ransom?

General Adams told me that when he commanded at Atlanta, in the civil war, that he had just mustered out a number of men who had served their time, with many who were sick and wounded and disabled. How happy were these

men, who now had their freedom from further dangers of war! Many of them had written home saying that they would soon be there. But just as they were about to go, the enemy came upon them. Then they all ran for their guns and the sick and well, the crippled and the nimble, alike rushed upon the enemy in a great bayonet charge.

What pleasure it gave them to fight for the nation that was paying the ransom for the slaves and granting freedom. With what joy do we serve the Son of God who came to give His life a ransom for all who will believe. This is the picture of joy which Isaiah spreads before us, beautiful and bright, as he describes in prospect the home coming of Israel from bondage and as he describes the final home coming of all who have been bought by the Son of God.

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

XX

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

"What must I do to be saved?"—*Acts 16: 30.*

How quickly conditions change. In an instant, at the shock of an earthquake, the jailer becomes a prisoner, condemned to die, and the prisoners become free men. Conditions in life will not save us any more than they saved the Philippian jailer, but may be the very occasion of our bondage. For, the worst form of imprisonment is not that which is endured behind barred windows, but rather that which sin imposes. A few years ago while in London we went to visit one of the largest prisons in that great city. We went safely from ward to ward. There was perfect order there. All the prisoners were clean and well fed. The next day we went to the awful White Chapel region in the same city. We had gone in about the distance of a block when my friend became frightened and turned back. I had not gone much farther when an officer of the law came up and tapping me on the shoulder said: "If you value your life you had better not go any further." And as I looked around, and saw the filth and degradation, the wrecks of human life, the beings

in human form that carried in their faces, the mark of every sin and every crime, I said, "the prison up yonder that we visited yesterday, and that is maintained by the government, is a heaven compared with this bondage of sin." It is true that "whom Christ makes free he shall be free indeed," and it is just as true that whom sin binds he is bound indeed. Yet many of you seem to love the bondage of sin, for you refuse to come out of it, and will not ask the question: "What must I do to be saved."

There is no one who does not at some time in life need assistance. There is no one who will not sooner or later need supreme help in the great moment when the earthquake of God's wrath shall break forth in fury. Sooner or later everyone must stand in the place of the jailer and cry for the help of the infinite God. The first thing then to be realized in this question, is our relation to Him.

I. The condition.

It was that of the sleeper.

You will notice that this man slept on duty. For this he was to lose his life, according to the Roman law. A rather dear sleep, you say. Up to this time he was not disturbed with this great question of his relation to his God. He had performed his duty with the ease and composure of a man who had settled every difficulty. He did his work just as well, no doubt as any ordi-

nary man ever did. Because a man performs his every-day duty to his employer in the best way does not prove that he is a Christian. Christianity is not the commodity of most business men. They do not die defending the principles of God's Word in the workshop or office. The world is pretty largely asleep on this great question.

There are people who are totally unconscious of the great power of music and the ability of the soul to master and enjoy harmony. They seem to be happy. They go about their work with just as much ease as did Beethoven or Handel. But some day there comes along a great musician who stirs the sleeping soul till it loves and longs for the ecstasy of the great organ and then it cries out, "What must I do to be a musician?" and the answer comes, "Believe in the master musician with all thy heart and life." So we are asleep to the great power and thrill of the Christ life, until He who can stir to wondrous deeds this careless life, comes to wake us and then we cry out with the Philippian jailer, "What must I do to have the power of God in my soul?"

There are people who walk about at night in their sleep; yet their eyes are wide open and they perform intelligent deeds. Some of them go to their daily work, perform some service and then if not wakened, return to their rest. There are many—ah, too many,—who walk about the world asleep to all that God says and does. They return

again to their homes and think they are fulfilling the mission of their lives. But alas! How sadly they miss the great end of being.

Like the somnambulist, like the Philippian jailer, it requires an earthquake of God's providence to wake them.

When walking along a railroad track in Northern Pennsylvania, we found an old man lying asleep with his head and shoulders across one rail of the track. We had heard the fast express coming, and that had hurried us on. So when we came up to the old man, we took hold of him and pulled him off the track, just in time to save him, for the next instant the train whizzed by at a rate of forty miles an hour. That would have been a fatal sleep had there not been helping hands to rescue him just in time. Yet that was a safe place to be, compared with the positions that some of you occupy. Worse than sleeping in church, and far worse than sleeping on a railroad track, is the sleep of sin in which some of you are indulging. The songs of praise and the prayers of God's people do not wake you. You sleep on, like the jailer in our text, until some great earthquake shakes you into decision. May God send the mighty earthquake, if nothing else will do, to wake you from sleep and make you cry out, "What must I do to be saved?"

Because a man is not disturbed is no proof that he is safe. A man may be asleep in a boat above the falls of Niagara, drifting toward cer-

tain death, but the fact that he is asleep will not save him. The ease of mind did not save this jailer. That Jonah was asleep in the boat did not save him in the great storm; for the sailors woke him violently and asked,

"What meanest thou O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."

II. The great need.

He did not wait to be courtmartialed, or to have a judge to pronounce sentence. He knew that the moment he had committed the offense he was a condemned man. Who then could help him? The only help *must* be in the power that had shown to him his danger.

But when he found that the prisoners had not escaped, and the matter was likely to be kept quiet he might have said what some of you have been saying day after day and year after year: "Not now." "Not to-night." "I'll wait a little longer before settling this question." But he did not. He cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" He saw only one thing, and that was the "must"—the need of being saved. It is when we come to this need of salvation, and find it the only way, and cry out "what *must* I do to be saved," that we find salvation at once.

When I was a pastor in Philadelphia, I used to visit the poor unfortunates in Moyamensing prison, at the request of the warden, whose family

belonged to my church. One day I found a poor miserable, half crazed, middle-aged man, in one of the cells, who was in great trouble. He felt the awfulness of his condition. He wanted to be released; so he went round and round the little cell crying out: "I must be out of here; O, there must be something done; I must not be a prisoner; O, I must be free, I must be out of here." The Philippian jailer, who had not heard the one-hundredth part of the preaching that you have heard, and the poor prisoner in Moyamensing prison, who had perhaps never heard a sermon, cried out for help. But many of you who have heard the most excellent preaching, for years, go away without feeling the need of a Saviour.

A poor drunkard strayed into our meeting one day in a Western city, and knelt before the pulpit, praying and crying out for help. Some said he was drunk and that the best thing was to put him out. But we prayed with him, until peace came into his heart and he believed he was saved. As he walked out of that place of meeting he said to us, "Look here, I want to tell you something. In about two minutes, while we were kneeling there, all the sins I had ever committed came up before me. I saw them all. O, it was terrible." Then we understood why he wept and wailed and moaned, while he was on his knees. He had to cry out, the sight was so terrible.

When one is drowning, he knows his danger and his doom, if he can not swim. But he can

not help himself. So with one in sin. There must be help or he will perish. But when one comes to help the drowning, he must have his way, even to rendering the one to be rescued unconscious. It may be the saviour of the drowning will wait till he is about to go down the last time, or it may be that he will deal the one to be rescued a hard blow to render him entirely helpless. Then he can save him. He must have his way. So when God comes to save us from sin and suffering and from woe, He must have His way. To this the jailer consented, when he cried out,

"What must I do to be saved?" He did not say to Paul and Silas, "Over there in cell 4 is an old thief. No one can reform him. He even stole from his mother. What must he do to be saved?" He did not say, "There in cell 23 is a murderer. He has killed many a man. What must he do to be saved?" But he cried out for himself, "What must I do to be saved?" The answer came quickly to him,

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

III. His GREAT HELP was salvation through belief.

Is salvation worth decision and belief in Christ? If we would value it as the mother does we would think so. A mother said to me only a few days ago, "One of my boys is now a Christian.

I have nothing in the world but what my two boys give to me, but if only the other would become a Christian I would be the richest woman in the universe. Whenever he goes out, in the morning, at noon, at night or at midnight, I am on my knees praying and praying for him lest he may be brought home a corpse and his soul be lost. I suffered much for him when he was small, but that is not to be compared with what I suffer now." O, how some of you mothers value salvation, and yet you young men treat it as a light thing and will not ask, "What must I do to be saved?" O, how some of you mothers are praying now; yet you young people will not believe, so as to be saved. A lady said last night in the meeting that she wanted to settle this question now and know before she came to die that she is a child of God. That is believing and being saved.

A young lady, eighteen years of age, was crossing the great railroad suspension bridge at Niagara Falls. As the train stopped on the American side, before going over, she stepped out, and leaning on the rail of the bridge looked down at the foaming waters. While standing there the train started, but she did not hear it because the sound of the waters filled her ears. Turning she saw the light on the rear end of the train vanishing. It was night and she had only the open ties of the bridge to walk on, and these she could only see dimly in the darkness, but she rushed after

the train with all her power. Finding that the train was fast leaving her, she stopped about one-fourth the way across and asked, what shall I do to save myself? Just then she heard another train coming after her—a train pursuing her, the mad waters of the Niagara underneath. The only way for her was across the bridge. As though with wings, she flew on in the darkness, and reached the other side in safety not three minutes too soon. Many of you have lingered by the side of this world's pleasures until their sounds have filled your ears, and you, like the Philippian jailer, are asleep, or like the young lady, do not see that your chance has gone. Let us, like that girl, fly for a safe refuge; like the Philippian jailer, cry out, "What must I do to be saved?"

But the jailer was accustomed to the doctrine of works, so he asked, "What must I *do* to be saved." He never once asked what he must believe. But the answer came, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." So we must be in right relation to Christ, who walks among us to bring pardon if we are worthy.

A German prince, travelling through France, visited the Arsenal at Toulon, where the galleys were kept. The commandant, as a compliment to his rank, offered to set at liberty any slave whom he selected. The prince went the round of the prison, therefore, and conversed with the prisoners. He inquired into the reason of their confinement, and met only with universal com-

plaints of injustice, oppression, and false accusation.

At last he came to one man, who admitted his imprisonment to be just. "My Lord," said he, "I have no reason to complain. I have been a wicked, desperate wretch. I have often deserved to be broken upon the wheel, and it is a mercy that I am here." The prince fixed his eyes upon the man, and, without hesitation, selected him, saying, "This is the man whom I wish released."

It was not that the man was handsomer, or older, or younger, or richer, or poorer than the rest; but that his heart was right, in relation to his benefactor. When we believe in Christ we are in right relation to him as was the Philippian jailer, and as in the case of the French prisoner.

Archbishop Cranmer was a friend of truth in evil times, and a plot was formed to take his life. God so ordered it that the papers which would have completed the plan were intercepted and traced to their authors, one of whom lived in the archbishop's family, and the other he had greatly served. He took these men in his palace and told them that some persons had disclosed their secrets and accused them of heresy. They loudly censured such villainy, and declared the traitors worthy of death; one of them adding that if an executioner was wanted he would perform the office. Struck with their perfidy, after lifting up his voice to Heaven and thanking God for his preservation, he produced their letters.

They fell on their knees, confessed and implored forgiveness. Cranmer expostulated with them forgave them and never alluded to their treachery.

His forgiveness of injuries was so well known that it became a byword, "Do my lord of Canterbury an ill turn, and you make him your friend forever."

These men were worthy of forgiveness only when they were in right relation to their Master, and were made to see their great sin, and the great heart of love in the breast of the Archbishop.

Like this there came to the Philippian jailer the great joy of salvation.

We do not longer hear of his fear of the Roman law, that he should die, if the prisoners should escape. A greater and better power was around him now. In one of the early centuries of this era, they brought a Christian before a king, who wanted him to recant and give up Christ and Christianity, but the man spurned the proposition. But the king said,

"If you don't do it, I will banish you."

The man smiled and answered, "You can't banish me from Christ, for He says He will never leave me nor forsake me."

The king got angry, and said, "Well I will confiscate your property and take it all from you."

And the man replied, "My treasures are laid up on high; you can not get them."

The king became still more angry, and said, "I will kill you."

"Why," the man answered, "I have been dead forty years; I have been dead with Christ, dead to the world, and my life is hid with Christ in God, and you can not touch it."

"What are you going to do with such a fanatic?" asked the king.

It was this joy and this testimony that comforted the jailer. It is belief always that gives assurance and calmness of mind. We soon learn to trust in the stability of nature. We learn early in life that certain principles govern certain sciences and certain branches of learning and then comes the action. Most of us are like the jailer. We want to begin the action first. It would have been impossible for this prison keeper to have washed and dressed the wounds of these prisoners before he was converted. It was impossible for him not to do it after his heart was changed in love for Christ. The beautiful story of a helpful Christianity was manifested in the act of the jailer. When a man believes, there will be plenty of action for no one will need to ask, "What must I do?"

The jailer cared for Paul and Silas, for the sake of Christ who had granted him pardon. This is the inspiration of the whole Christian world.

For some months a family, the poorest of the poor, lived on a miserable street in our city in an almost starving condition. The oldest boy, a

lad of fourteen, sold papers; but the income from this uncertain trade barely paid the rent of the cramped and cheerless quarters in which the six children and their mother lived.

In the neighbourhood was a Jewish baker, who made a living by the hardest and most unremitting toil. He was poor, but his religion taught him to love his fellow creatures. He heard of the distress near him; here were people poorer than himself, and he had one of the children to come over once a day and take a loaf of bread. This charity, meaning so much to the baker, became for months almost the only means of supporting life that this poverty-stricken Christian family had.

But one day John, the little father of his five brothers and sisters, "struck a job," as the phrase goes among such boys. Pretty soon the family moved into another tenement, where once a day the sun glanced in at one window. John was doing very well, and his family, although still poor enough, were happier than they had been for years; but he could not forget the baker and the kindness he had shown them when they were starving.

All one week John was very thoughtful. At last, one evening, he said to his mother,

"Mother, I want to put a thought before you. I've had it in mind some time, an' I can't help thinking it's a duty.

"You know how the baker helped us out.

Now there's that family across the street, where the old man has just died. There's six children in that family, just like us, an' not a mouthful for 'em to eat. Can't we take one of 'em in? I could git up a little earlier an' go to bed a little later, an' work a little harder. But if you don't want to do it, I won't say any more."

The boy stopped and looked at his mother. Their struggle was hard enough as it was. They could scarcely live, and if John lost his place they would be worse off than ever. What risk to undertake to feed another mouth!

"What do you want to do this for?" asked the mother, softly.

John looked away. "Well," he said, "just on account of what the baker did for us."

"All right, John," said his mother; "for the sake of the baker we will take the child in."

An act of kindness sows its own seed; and the harvests repeat themselves somewhere and some time, by an unchangeable law. The joy of imitation, as well as the duty of gratitude, will pass along the first giver's good deed after he has forgotten it.

It was for the Master's sake that the jailer cared for Paul and Silas. Beautiful story of man redeemed, who no longer asks, "What must I do to be saved," but rather, "What may I do for the Saviour when saved?"

XXI

PRAYER AND PROVIDENCE,—DO THEY CONFLICT?

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he knelt upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.—*Daniel 6: 10.*

A BEAUTIFUL story tells us that a private soldier in the army of Lord Cornwallis, was often absent from his quarters and from the company of his fellow soldiers. This attracted the attention of his comrades, who suspected that he was guilty of treason; so they had him arrested, tried by court-martial, and condemned to death. While awaiting execution, the Marquis, whose duty it was to oversee all military affairs at a distance from the seat of government, examined the minutes of the trial, became dissatisfied with the case and sent for the prisoner. Upon being questioned, the soldier solemnly denied the charge; and swore allegiance to his sovereign. Then he gave as a reason for his absence, that he was then praying to his God. He said he had made this defence at his trial but was not believed.

It seemed a misfortune for this man to pray;

for by it he was arrested and convicted. So with Daniel in that wonderful story of his life, everything seemed against him. What was the use in praying if the act only brought him into deeper trouble? We have all had similar experiences. Then we ask ourselves "what is the use of prayer?" For all things seem to go on in their own way in spite of us.

These seemed to be instances of the conflict between prayer and Providence, if there is ever such a thing. They seemed to be "flying in the face of Providence," "tempting God," and "laying up wrath against the day of wrath." Surely the object of prayer is to bring release from care and worry and trouble, is it not? Yes, surely that, but much more. Prayer has as its greatest object, the bringing of the petitioner into harmony with the will and plan of God. This must therefore include all the elements of prayer, whatever they may be. Much of the prayer that is offered is of the selfish kind, which supposes that God will change circumstances and events to suit our conveniences and momentary success. We do not pray, "if it be Thy will," as we should, but with the feeling that it "must be so," or our prayer is not answered. So it appeared very foolish for Daniel to keep up a custom which only brought him trouble and did not seem to help him in his daily life. Why could he not just as well omit his prayer for a time and save himself the trouble? Because he saw the divine side of prayer.

I. The divine side of prayer.

Like the people who condemned the soldier and like those who were watching for the life of Daniel there are millions who only see one side of truth,—who live on half truth, and that the human half,—who eat the thin coat of jelly the world spreads and think they are eating the bread of life. Is not the world full of poor houses and pauper dens, and are not these places full of paupers because so many attempt to live on half truth? For truth is *whole,*—having two sides, —one side is God's, the other man's; one side is earth's, the other heaven's; one side time's, the other eternity's. It was this large view of life that led Daniel to pray that memorable prayer, and led the English soldier to cling so loyally to his God.

Most men are looking for their own advantage and are not satisfied unless they see immediate results. They start out in the morning, having offered a prayer for their own success, and unless all things move in their favour, they are accustomed to say that prayer is of no use. Does any man think his watch is of no use because it does not always keep perfect time? Does he throw it away and refuse ever after to look at any watch or clock just because his timepiece which he had trusted does not serve him at every moment as he thinks it should?

Just so foolish is the man who would abandon all prayer relations with his God just because

they do not come out as he expects. The man with the watch does not forget that there is a providence back of the watch—that is the watchmaker, who can usually make a watch run right if he has it in his care. But the owner is so anxious to keep agoing that he would rather do with an imperfect timepiece than to give up altogether. There are myriads of people who would rather struggle on in the winding, bewildering maze of events, than to let the infinite God have His way. O, sad indeed, that we should ever forget God's side of this great existence.

A man looks in a mirror to see his likeness held before him. He does not think of the unseen providence, which is the other half of the whole truth. He does not think that the quicksilver on the back of the mirror, though unseen, renders visible the object which stands before it. That quicksilver is the unseen providence of that event. So back of all things useful to man is the unseen power of God, holding forth the truth, only one half of which we see. And the man who is wise enough to win the special favour and help of the Almighty by going out of the sight of man into the unseen providences of God, is the one who wins as did Daniel. There is then no conflict between true prayer and providence.

But what is true prayer? It is the request which is "agreeable to God's will." All else is empty sound.

If my child comes to me and says, "Papa

please strike down the neighbour's little boy because I am angry at him." Will I regard that as a proper petition? By no means, so if I pray to God to strike down my enemy or to destroy his property, God will not regard that as a prayer, for the only privilege we can ask of God in regard to our enemies is good, for we are to pray for them who "despitefully use us and persecute us."

Some years ago a noted skeptic, proposed as a test of prayer that a certain number of patients in a hospital should be selected to be prayed for, and a certain other number should be selected and not prayed for, to see which would recover first. The Christian world scorned such a thing, not that prayer is of no use, for it is; but because such a test does not conform to God's will. God has other things to do beside trying to please the whims of skeptics, who never try to please the infinite God. He has given so much evidence of His power and love, that to do anything further would be to belittle His cause. This skeptic might as well ask that God should make a square triangle to prove mathematics. God then will only regard that as prayer which is agreeable to His will and it is our business to find what that is, as did Daniel of old. Then we will have the power that rules the world, moving and changing events, as when Elijah brought the rain from the clouds at Carmel; as when Joshua made the sun and the moon stand still till he had finished his

battle; as when Peter prayed at Pentecost and the thousands were converted; as with the praying soldier, so with you, *prayer* binds half truth to half truth making it *whole.* Truth is not to be divided but united. Christ came into the world to "bind up the broken hearted" by binding up to each soul the broken truth of God. Christ came into the world to heal the diseased and the leprous, by giving them—new—whole —unbroken; the power of God and the truth of God which, so far as man was concerned, man had shattered. But this can not be effected with half a weapon. Whole truth settles the conflict forever. The experience of this soldier as well as that of Daniel, make this truth not visionary but visible. Does it mean anything to you that Christ connected earth and heaven, by the birds that fly between? Listen. "Behold the fowls of the air for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them, are ye not much better than they?" Do you see only God's creation without seeing God in it? Then there is no help for you beyond the laws of nature. The very bird to which Christ referred, going higher and higher in its flight until lost to the sight of man, seems a reminder of the flight of prayer as it goes higher and higher until the throne of God is touched and moved. Are your eyes so dim that you see only the flowers around you while in their midst stands one who says, "Consider the lilies of the

field, how they grow . . . and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Should we not see Him? Is not there a suggestion of this whole truth, of God and man?

There are families in which one child receives but little love, less kindness, and still less attention. Then there are other children in that family upon whom the father is always showering his love and favour. The former receives little because he asks for little or nothing. He asks for very little because he has never gone round to that side of his father. The father is not unjust. He does all that this child will permit, and more than he deserves. The other is always on the love side of his father drawing him out telling him of his great love and praising him for the blessings already received, as Daniel thanked God just when he saw the black cloud of trouble gathering. So there are those who never praise God for His goodness, who never look keenly into his providences. These are they who do not pray. But those who dwell on the love side of the heavenly Father, what blessings are theirs. Like Coleridge, who in his darkest earthly moment when he meditated suicide looked up and saw the other half of God's truth in the brightness of the providence side of this dark cloud and said,

> "Behind a frowning providence
> He hides a smiling face."

But let us see what further happened to the English soldier. The Marquis then put him to the test of truthfulness, by making him kneel down and pray aloud, which he did with such fluency and ardour that the Marquis believed his story, revoked his sentence, made him a personal attendant and afterward raised him to a high position in the army. This was

II. The test. How well this man in the story stood it! How well Daniel stood it! Everyone shall be tried. And there is a chance for everyone to achieve a decided victory.

"In this world ye shall suffer persecution, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." If you have anything good the world will try you, in order to get or destroy it, and the higher the claim the greater the trial. It matters not to us that those who try us are not so good as those who are tried. How often this is the case. Like the soldiers in this army of Cornwallis, like Daniel and his enemies, there are many in the churches and out, who arrest and try their comrades on a false charge and condemn them to death. "Behold, the time will come when he who killeth you thinketh he doeth God service." But this must in no way affect the faithfulness of the Christian. The fire only burns the dross from the gold, the grinding only adds to the diamond the greater brilliancy. There is not in any

of these things the least conflict between true prayer and providence, but the greatest harmony. Because a boy is subjected to severe tests in school, is it to be supposed that the rules of the school are all made to work against him, and that the teacher is opposed to him and that he is hated by every one? By no means; all the tests to which he is subjected are to give him power in himself according to the order of things as there established in the school. It is the test that proves the harmony between teacher and scholar and in like manner between Christian and the Christ. It was the test in the case of the soldier and of Daniel, that gave them power over man and events.

It is by these trials, these tests, that Christians become known. By these we find the meaning of this life. What vast numbers of our fellow men may have noble natures, but are like the gold in the hillside or the diamond in the dust—undiscovered. When laden with care and tried with sorrow we seek for the whole truth; for God who is the embodiment of that power. We then search to see if our names are written, high or low, or at all, in the register of God. Then we ask, are we on the human side known as living and active, while on the side toward God there is inscribed upon our walking bodies as upon moving monuments, "An unknown man lies here?" Does it pay to live on half truth—on that which has to do alone with the time when a vast eternity

spreads out before us with infinite relations and destinies? God wants you to accept his Son who is the embodiment of this whole truth—for he says: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."

Again the story of the soldier and that of Daniel reveal

III. The victory.

No such victory did Cornwallis ever win as was gained by this unnamed soldier. The battle was not fought upon the open field. It was away in those secret, silent moments when his soul wrestled with God as Jacob wrestled with the Angel. It is prayer that wins the battle of your life. This is nothing new. It is the same that we find away over in the experience of Daniel. The soldier was not only set free but promoted to a high position. Daniel not only escaped harm, but also became the ruler of the whole realm. Now ye doubters where is your vaunted conflict between prayer and providence? Come forth now and stand up before us and disprove this which happens every day before the eyes of every one. Can you do it? No? Then be silent ever after and listen to the endless testimony of those who come forth as witnesses for the harmony between prayer and providence.

There was the sickly mother, I can yet see her face, though she has long since closed her lips in the long silence. There she lay upon the sick bed year after year, with hardly enough strength to

lift her wasting hands, and yet she held as by iron chains that boy hundreds of miles away. He was kept in the most unusual way. He was protected from countless dangers. What seemed miracles almost, were performed by him, because she sent forth her prayers for him straight to the throne of God, like the homing pigeons, which go sure of their flight. Yes the world is moved and swayed and held largely by the praying mothers. Come with me into the homes I have visited, and into the scenes through which I have passed and I will prove to you that there is only harmony between true prayer and providences, as truly now as in the days of Daniel.

Why, God intends that the world shall be managed by prayer, and He dares us to do it. There, see that Daniel! Get a good view of him and you will never forget his victory, which is only a specimen of those that may be achieved by us at every turn in life. One praying man or woman may turn aside the wrath of God from a whole town and a whole community. God would have spared Sodom at the request of Lot, if there had been found in that wicked city ten righteous people.

In the Franco-German war the French hospital at Vendome was in charge of the late Madame Coralie Cahen, one of the noted nurses of the time. There, aided by two nurses and seven Christian sisters of mercy, she received thousands of French and German soldiers.

When the Prussians occupied Vendome, they wished to hold the hospital and plant on it the German flag. But, warned of the enemy's intentions, Mme. Cahen, early one January morning, visited the Prussian general, who, surrounded by his staff, was about to seize the building.

"Sir," she exclaimed, "we have received your wounded and nursed them as though they were our own. We will continue to do so, but we will remain a French hospital. We will not have it converted into a German hospital." Her request was granted, and so she conquered a whole army. Why then may we not lead God to change his direction of working by putting ourselves in union with Him, so that we may accomplish great things at His command. Man is the wonder worker and God is his inspiration and power.

There was, in a western city, a minister who was not a great preacher, or a great personal worker, and yet large numbers came into his church at every communion. Many years he laboured with the same result. He could not understand it himself, till one day he visited an old man of his church, who had been sick for over twenty years. Then the sick man told the minister that he had spent most of his time praying for those whom he knew, that they might be brought to Christ, and then he produced the list of those he had been praying for, and it contained the name of nearly every one who had been brought to Christ through those fruitful years. Yes, true

prayer and providence are in harmony as truly as are the earth and electricity. But there must be the working out through the man, of this great power. We must not foolishly pray for that which we can do of ourselves. Mr. Moody was once in a meeting in one of our western cities when a man rose in the audience and said he needed one hundred dollars to carry on some benevolent work, when Mr. Moody replied, "O, Mr. So and So, I would not bother the Lord with a small thing like that, I would just go out and get it." So there may seem at times to be a delay on the part of God to do what we ourselves should accomplish. God will never be moved by any prayer for the accomplishment of anything which we can do ourselves. If you had asked "Stonewall" Jackson when he lay dying what was the secret of his power, he would have answered with one word—prayer. To learn the secret of the endurance of Valley Forge and the war of the Revolution, you must find all those unmarked spots where Washington, his soldiers, and all the faithful wives and mothers knelt in prayer to God that He would save the cause. If you would find the secret of much failure, you must look to a lack of this communion with God, as when the disciples of Christ failed to cast out the evil spirit, they came to Him and asked, "Why could not we too cast him out?" And Christ answered, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." The same answer must

be given to vast numbers to-day. You fail in school, in business, in speculation, because you have neither found the secret of power nor the power of this secret. Every true victory is fought single handed and in secret; for this gives constancy. You may have faith, but this secret power—communion with God,—gives fulness, and you have power which never fails, and which promotes you as it promoted the English soldier, as it gave Daniel the power of the king, and led Paul to speak of the great harmony between prayer and Providence when he said:

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

XXII

THE EVER PRESENT CHRIST

Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.—*St. Luke 24: 15.*

THESE disciples were now turning from the darkest scene that had ever spread its blackness across the sky, to obscure the way of man; that is, the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. No glimmer of light seemed to come to them from anywhere. There was not even a star to peer over the edge of darkness to show that all was well beyond. It was as though an awful storm had swept the earth clean, and these two forlorn mortals were groping in the darkness in search of a spear of grass, a faded rose, or even a bent and broken tree, a straying animal or a mortal man. All things of worth were in the past to them, for they said: "We had hoped it had been He which should have redeemed Israel."

But look; suddenly there came to them a glorious light. It shone straight from heaven, it gleamed by their side, it lighted the whole earth. It was Jesus Christ the Son of Righteousness. But they saw it not for their eyes were holden, blinded, bedimmed, by their doubt. They were as men in a dark and gloomy cave, who

open their eyes and see nothing, and then say: "Why does not the day dawn?" Then someone takes them by the hand and leads them out into the light, for the sun is shining in all his glory, and a world of wonder bursts upon the view. So when Christ led these disciples into the light they were entranced with the view of mortal life spread before them.

So our eyes are opened and we are fascinated with the view of the

I. Ever present Christ.

There He was, and they knew it not. This has always been His method of coming to us. If man could create a flower, he would put a mark upon it which would say: *"I made this."* If man could create an oak he would write his name upon every leaf that all passers-by might know the author.

But when God makes a flower He hides Himself in the beauty of colour and sweetness of perfume which delight the senses; and says by the thorn to the man who would pluck it, "Have a care, how you use this."

When God makes an oak, He stands by it throughout the years (for by His will alone it can live) and when the woodman comes to fell the tree, He is there in the strength of fibre, to say to the man who deals the sturdy blows, "Beware what you do with this."

When God creates a human being, He follows

fast and far after that life, in Jerusalem, in the temple, in the market place, anywhere to protect and keep. Yes He follows even through the darkest trials, through the "valley and shadow," which lies at the outer border of this life to gild with the brightness of His glory, and to keep by the might of His power. All over the world this is true, "Jesus Himself drew near and went with them." And no wonder, for He heard them speak His name. Did you ever hear your name spoken in the great throng, or on the lonely highway? Then you were all alertness. Did you come near and listen? Then you heard with attention. And you followed and learned what they said of you. Christ heard them speak of His prophetic history, of His birth, of His life, and of His death. Like a stranger He entered into conversation. As a mother sometimes quietly goes into the nursery and hears the children talk of her, so Christ Himself draws near and walks with each of us by day and night, in sunshine and in shadow, in heat and in cold. Unseen to us He goes with us through all the trials of life and places over every dark event and even over the grave, the never failing light of eternal life; for "Jesus Himself drew near and went with them." Yes, He is the ever present Christ, for He has said: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

We went far into the catacombs of Rome, away from the light, and out of the beaten paths.

We saw the strange inscriptions which only the taper revealed, and then we looked about for the guide, but could not see him. We began to fear that we were lost, but just at that instant the guide came up to us and we knew we were safe. So all through that dark journey the guide never left us for an instant. How often this has happened to us in life's journey! We have thought we were left alone, especially in the moments of our trials and bereavements; when, behold, the great Guide of our lives stands forth and says: "It is I, be not afraid," "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

A Jewish legend tells how, when the three children were flung into the furnace, the Prince of Hail came to God and said, "Lord of the universe, let me go and cool the furnace;" but Gabriel, the archangel, started up and said, "Nay, for all men know that hail quenches fire; but I, the Prince of Fire, will go down and make the flame cool within to save the boys, and hot without to slay the executioners, and will perform a miracle within a miracle;" and the Holy One said, "Go down." And in the Song of the Three Holy Children in the Apochrypha we read how the angel of the Lord moved in the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist, whistling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, nor hurt nor troubled them, for He beat back the fierce flames with His dewy wings.

This is a beautiful story; but it misses the truth

somewhat, for the record in Daniel tells us that it was the Son of God who walked with the three Hebrews, as he walked in later day with the two on their way to Emmaus. So He walks with us all through the varied courses of life, and especially does He come forth to manifest Himself in the fiery trials.

A quiet and thoughtful boy once engaged to work for a man. He was specially proficient in all he did. His employer watched him carefully to see what was the secret of his proficiency. He noticed that the boy often turned over his coat lapel to gaze upon something; and on investigation he found that the boy had there a picture of his mother, whose presence and power never left him. She was his inspiration and the power of his life. Far truer is it of us that He who will never leave us nor forsake us, has also said, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

What a wonderful comfort to us all that Christ is always with us, guiding us by His wisdom, and keeping us in His love. How beautifully this is told in the twenty-third psalm, and the sixth verse. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Some one says, "A striking figure underlies these words; a nomad chieftain, in his desert encampment, surrounded by retainers; a fugitive appealing for protection; the sheik welcoming him to his tent and feasting him while his baffled enemies look

on. Thus the psalmist finds an asylum in Jehovah's tent; his pursuers drop off one by one until he sees about him only the friendly retainers of his Host. He cries, "Only Goodness and Mercy shall pursue me all the days of my life." The word "pursue" is generally used in the sense of hostile pursuit, but in this case the character of the pursuers disarms fear. Bedawin hospitality knew no stint within a three days' limit; Jehovah's knows no *limit;* "And I will dwell in the house of Jehovah (i. e., I shall be his guest) forever."

Every Christian for years has sung, and rightly too.

"Nearer my God to Thee,
Nearer to Thee."

And while we sing this grand old hymn, let us recall that, He is ever coming nearer to us in all events of life, for He is the ever present Christ.

II. What Christ will do for us, if we listen to Him and invite Him in.

Christ's mission is one of companionship. This goes beyond the mere sacrifice of His life. If it were not so He never would have appeared to the disciples on this journey. His presence is not that of idle curiosity; for He opens to us the Scriptures. O what a blessing, for one of the first elements of companionship is that of conversation, improvement, knowledge. O how puzzled we were at first with the Greek Grammar! How

strange the letters looked, and how formidable seemed the declensions of the nouns, and conjugations of the verbs. We were utterly bewildered, but that room-mate who had been through it all, how wisely he opened to us the knowledge that seemed to us so hidden! How we leaned on him, asking him all the things we did not understand. We could never have succeeded without him. How strangely dark all things seemed to these two disciples, and how they needed the ever-present Christ to tell them the infinite truth of God. We can not succeed without Him.

One day a pale-faced little girl walked hurriedly into a book-store in Annasburg, and said to the man serving at the counter:

"Please, sir, I want a book that's got 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' in it, and how much is it, sir? and I'm in a great hurry."

The shopman bent down and dusted his spectacles. "And suppose I haven't the book you want, what then, my dear?"

"O, sir, I shall be so sorry; I want it so!" and the little voice trembled at there being a chance of disappointment.

The kind shopman took the thin hand of his small customer in his own. "Will you be so very sad without the book; and why are you in such a hurry?"

"Well, sir, you see, I went to school one Sabbath when Mrs. West, one who takes care of me,

was away; and teacher read about a Good Shepherd who said those words, and about a beautiful place where He takes care of His children, and I want to go there. I'm so tired of being where there's nobody to care for a little girl like me, only Mrs. West, who says I'd be better dead than alive."

"But why are you in such a hurry?"

"My cough's getting so bad now, sir, and I want to know all about Him before I die; it 'u'd be so strange to see Him and not to know Him. Besides, if Mrs. West knew I was here she'd take away the six cents I've saved running messages to buy the book with, so I'm in a hurry to get served."

The bookseller wiped his glasses very vigorously this time, and lifting a book from off the shelf, he said: "I'll find the words you want, my little girl; come and listen."

Then he heard the words of the loving Saviour (Luke xviii:16), and told her how the Good Shepherd had got a home all light and rest and love prepared for those who love Him and serve Him.

"O, how lovely!" was the half-breathless exclamation of the eager little buyer.

"And He says, 'Come.' I'll go to Him. How long do you think it may be, sir, before I see Him?"

"Not long, perhaps," said the shopkeeper, turning away his head. "You keep the six cents,

and come here every day, while I read you more out of this book."

Thanking him, the small child hurried away. To-morrow came, and another morrow, and many days passed, but the little girl never came to hear about Jesus again. One day a loud-voiced, untidy woman ran into the shop saying, "Dixey's dead! She died rambling about some Good Shepherd, and she said you was to have these six cents for the mission box at school. As I don't like to keep dead men's money, here it is," and she ran out of the shop. The six cents went into the box; and when the story of Dixey was told, so many followed her example with their cents that at the end of the year "Dixey's cents," as they were called, were found to be sufficient to send out a missionary to China to bring stranger-sheep to the Good Shepherd.

So Christ has come to be the teacher and guide of life, to open to us the Scriptures as well as to open before us all the possibilities of life.

Charles James Fox, of England, had not the blessings of good home training; but, this misfortune was in large measure remedied by his association with the great Edmund Burke. He once said in public that if he were to put together into one scale all political information which he had gathered, all the knowledge he had gained from science, and all that he had learned in the affairs of the world, and into the other the benefit he had derived from his companionship with Mr. Burke,

he should be at a loss to which to give the preference.

Was it not even better with the two who walked to Emmaus that day, and is it not better with all who will hear the divine voice? For however much wisdom and knowledge we have we will still need the personal power of Him who walked with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. He alone can open to us the Scripture. Paul emphasizes this general truth when he says. "I count all things but loss for the excellency of Christ."

Emerson once said that "our chief want in life is somebody who shall make us do what we can. This is the service of a friend. With him we are easily great. There is a sublime attraction in him, to whatever virtue is in us. How he flings wide open the door of existence! What questions we ask him. It is the only real society."

There is only one thing lacking in these beautiful words of the great essayist, and that is the mention of Christ as this friend. For He is the friend who "sticketh closer than a brother."

How beautiful is this divine companionship. It provides for every condition and against every need. It took care of these two discouraged disciples, and can easily care for everyone.

A little girl and her baby brother were playing on the track of the Pennsylvania Railroad, in the Horseshoe Curve. Just as the engine of a long passenger train made the turn, the

engineer saw the children. The shriek of the whistle startled the girl, and every eye looking over could see them. Close to the rail, in the upright rock was a little niche out of which a piece of rock had been blasted. In an instant the baby had been thrust into this niche; and as the cars came thundering by, the passengers, holding their breath, heard the clear voice of the little sister ring out: "Cling close to the rock, Johnny! Cling close to the rock!"

And the little creature snuggled in and put his head as close to the rock as possible, while the heavy cars went by.

"Cling close to the Rock," is the warning given to each one of us. Are we heeding it?

Yes, He is our companion, to teach, and shield and guard and defend.

III. But what were they doing for Him, for companionship has two sides.

They invited Him into their hearts and homes. He came as any ordinary traveller would come. He asked no favours, no note of introduction, no special privilege. He entered through the same door by which all other friends came.

It was a habit of their life to invite a stranger in.

There is no one who will enter your home without an invitation, unless he be a thief, and Christ will not break this rule for any human

being. He will not dishonour the will of any man, or burst open the barred door of any heart. He will rather make as though He would go further, or if not invited in He will go on His way. Therefore let us stand by the door and watch for His coming. Send out hope to meet Him upon the way to invite this King to enter the home of your soul. Send out joy to sing the triumphal march, as He comes in all His majesty and grandeur. Send love into the home to make ready for His coming. Send forth loyalty to cry out "Come in, O King and rule forever in my heart."

> "Saviour, Saviour, hear my humble cry,
> While on others Thou art calling,
> Do not pass me by."

Shall we let the two weary travellers on the rough Judean hills outdo us? Rather let us say, "Come in, O Thou blessed Christ of God."

But when Christ is once in the heart and home, what then? Entertainment must be provided. They spread the feast for Him, but He soon showed that it was not His body, but His soul that was hungry, and nineteen hundred years have made no change in Him.

It was a hungry God who walked those six miles and a half with those two disciples. He was hungry for their love, for their loyalty, for their lives. As soon as they knew Him, He had

His immortal hold upon them. Hence, they went to Jerusalem or wherever He chose.

Why did He go and sit over against the treasury in the Temple and watch those who put money in? Because He was a hungry God—needing the means of advancing His kingdom. He needed human hearts to help Him. He saw the woman with two mites and was pleased. Above all other things God hungers for the means by which His work may be carried on. Governments manage their affairs at great cost, and why should it be thought strange that God should be treated fairly, inasmuch as He is infinitely more necessary to us than any government? God is too often made a beggar.

It was a strange event in history that brought Henry IV. to the door of the Pope of Rome, where for three days he was denied admission, and where he had to do penance in the cold of winter until the Pope was pleased to admit him. A king, as a suppliant, waiting for days! And yet the scene in many a life is the same, except that it is the King of Heaven, who waits and waits for us.

The two disciples on the way to Emmaus, had the same King with them, and happy were they because they invited Him in to be their guest. And happy are all who thus honour Him, for He gives the everlasting joy of His constant presence, purchased by His infinite love.

Love strong as death, nay stronger,
Love mightier than the grave;
Broad as the earth, and longer
Than the ocean's widest wave;
This is the love that sought us,
This is the love that bought us,
This is the love that brought us
To the gladdest day from saddest night,
From deepest shame to glory bright,
From depths of death to life's fair height,
From darkness to the joy of light.

INDEX

Adams, Gen., 264
Age, 120
Aguinaldo, 98
Alps, 150
Architect, 27, 69
Atlanta, 155

Baltimore, 258
Bartimeus, 55
Benevolence, 36
Bible, 29, 63, 87, 108, 111, 117, 119
Blind, 53
Brain, 197
Bridge, 60
Business, 158

Cain, 118
Calvary, 201
Captives, 51
Care, God's, 203, 204
Catacombs, 53
Certainty, 83
Christ, 12, 13, 15, 20, 25, 34, 46, 55, 57, 66, 76, 81, 120, 148, 159, 160, 163, 165, 183, 189, 251, 254, 262, 263, 277, 294, 296, 305, 307
Christianity, 21, 23, 48, 83, 150, 268, 288
Choice, 91
Church, 63, 64, 157, 182
Columbus, Christopher, 156, 173, 174
Commerce, 41
Conditions, 266, 267
Conscience, 29, 30, 73
Conversion, 176
Cranmer, 276
Creed, 83
Cuba, 97

Daniel, 31, 121, 281, 282, 289, 290, 296, 298
Darius, 31
Discovery, 21, 45
Doubters, 289

Eden, 124, 188, 196
Eiffel Tower, 111
Elijah, 205
Emancipation Proclamation, 264
Eternity, 112, 113
Everlasting life, 112, 113, 114, 117, 119, 250

Father, 211, 212
Future, 117, 124

Garrison, W. L., 200
Gideon, 34
Gladstone, 171
God, 52, 60, 63, 64, 65, 70, 77, 88, 89, 90, 103, 123, 128, 129, 177, 205, 206, 295
Gospel, 70, 71, 78, 81, 83, 84, 138, 140, 141, 142, 143, 148

Holy Spirit, 34, 41

Immortality, 119, 147
Infidelity, 29, 143

Judgment, 109, 110, 195
Justice, 93, 94, 95
Justly, 193, 195

Kaiser, 147, 148
King, 131, 147

Lee, Gen. R. E., 70
Le Verrier, 62, 63
Life, 14, 19, 77, 80, 83, 87, 89, 90, 102, 104, 105, 106, 115, 123, 152, 161, 168, 171, 253, 256
Lincoln, Abraham, 199

Man, 24, 25, 26, 54, 67
Menelik, 259
Manila, 98, 204
Menyana, 13
Mercy, 95, 96, 98, 99, 196, 197
Milton, 54, 178
Mirror, 108, 283
Missions, 34, 69
Moody, D. L., 189, 292
Moses, 22, 170
Mother, 137, 178, 183, 186, 298

Napoleon, 151, 152
Nathanael, 12, 14, 16, 21, 22, 24, 26
Neptune, 62, 63
Niagara, 136, 172, 273
Nicodemus, 51, 138, 139, 145, 146, 147, 149

Oneness, 42, 43

Parthenon, 26
Paul, 52, 56, 63, 77, 115, 124, 126, 143, 189
Peace, 126, 130, 131, 132
Pentecost, 39
Phidias, 26, 27
Philadelphia, 29, 271
Pleiad, 11, 12, 20, 23
Power, 35, 40, 41, 72, 82, 113, 114
Prayer, 279, 280, 284, 290

Ransom, 252, 260, 261
Revelation, 18, 20

Sacrifice, 58, 257, 258
Salvation, 76, 77, 79, 92
Science, 21
Shaw, Judge, 93
Sin, 75, 154
Victoria, 162, 201
Virginia, 11, 69
Year, 56, 57, 59
Youth, 100, 103, 110

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